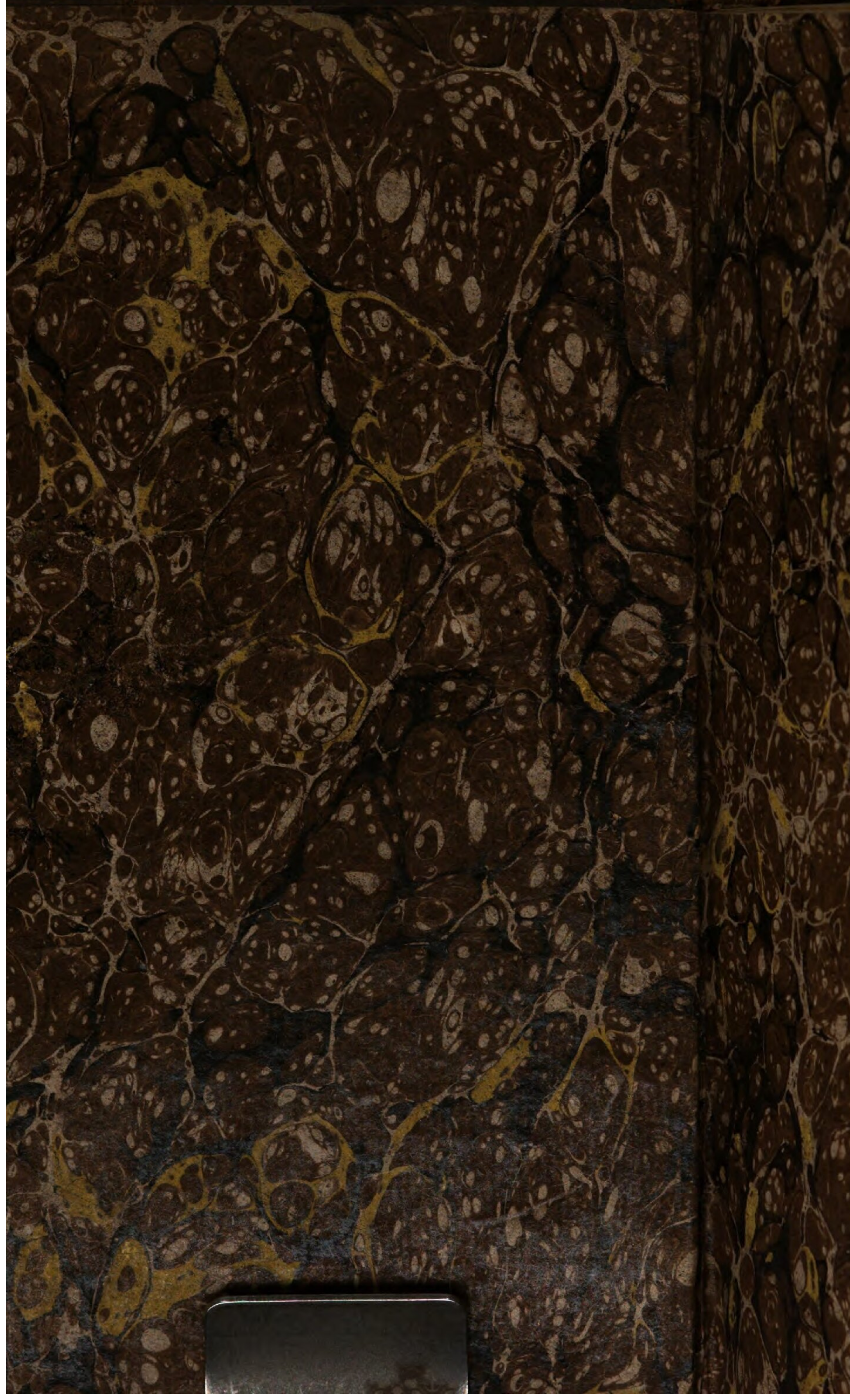








Polem. 2681.

96. Ret. 914. a.

FARTHER THOUGHTS
ON THE NATURE OF THE
GRAND APOSTACY
OF THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES,
Foretold by the Apostles :
WITH
OBSERVATIONS on the LAWS against HERESY,
THE SUBSCRIPTION TO ARTICLES
OF HUMAN COMPOSITION,
AND
OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE UTMOST
IMPORTANCE
TO THE
RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS,
And to Christianity in general.

By HENRY TAYLOR, A. M.
Rector of CRAWLEY and Vicar of PORTSMOUTH in *Hants.*;
Author of BEN MORDECAI's Apology for embracing
Christianity.

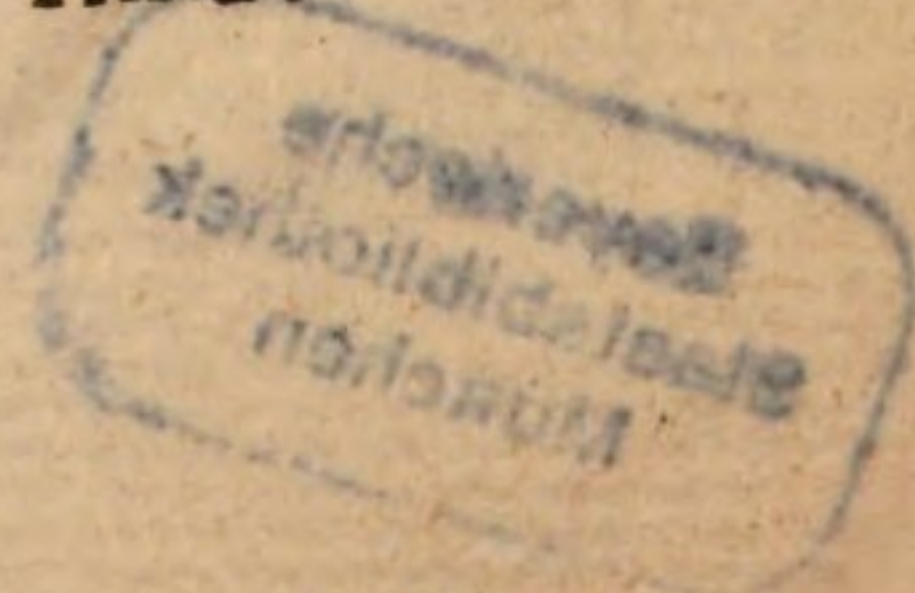
If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed: and ye shall know the Truth; and the Truth shall make you free.

JOHN viii. 32.

Stand fast in the Liberty wherewith CHRIST hath made us free; and be not entangled again in the Yoke of Bondage.

GAL. v. 1.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.
M·DCC·LXXXIII.



FARTHER THOUGHTS
ON THE NATURE OF THE
GRAND APOSTACY
OF THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

IT has always been my desire to see Religion treated as a Rational Consistent thing, free from all absurdity or folly—The Religion of Nature is capable of the strictest Evidence; and therefore *that* is never to be deviated from or given up. The Religion of Christ, as it lies in the New Testament, is perfectly agreeable to, and consistent with, what Natural Religion teacheth; and so it will always be found by them that examine into its Truth with Sincerity. Sykes's Preface to the 2d Edition of his Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion.

Ea est constans Ecclesiae Anglicanae & omnium Evangelicorum opinio; S. Scripturam regulam perfectam factisque perspicuam continere; ex qua omnes Fidei articuli creditu necessarii, omnes que morum Regulæ ad salutem obtinendam requisitæ dignoscantur. Hanc normam qui destruit, aut huic saluti obtinendæ minus idoneam reddit, eo ipso Fidei nostræ fundamentum subruit & protinus evertit. Whitby Examen Var. Lec. Jo. Mill. Præfat.

T H E
P R E F A C E.

THOUGH the general design of this Pamphlet is to trace out the Apostacy of the Christian Churches, from the word of God to the decrees of men in matters of Faith; and to shew, that such decrees lay no obligation upon Conscience, agreeably to the XXth article of our Church; yet I could not help seizing this opportunity (in hopes of a more candid hearing than could be expected in the days of Bigotry) to expatiate freely and explicitly upon the impropriety, or rather the inconsistency, of the Protestant Churches, in their penal Laws against Heresy, and what they falsely call Apostacy; as well as in requiring a Subscription of the Clergy and several of the Laity

to Articles of human Composition ; and thereby maintaining two opposite *Rules of Faith* ; which if not immediately found to be inconsistent with one another when the Articles are first made, must become so in a very short time afterwards ; and consequently generate dissensions and sects among honest, useful, and well-meaning subjects, instead of unanimity.

The present liberal way of thinking among all Ranks of men, seems loudly to call upon our Governors for a Reform in these and such like inconveniences, with regard to our Religious Liberties ; which the first Reformers left with us as they found them.

The Politicians of former times knew but little of the nature of Religion, and have been afraid of making any alteration in the laws which concern it, though ever so unjust(*a*). They have heard of Heresy as a Crime for which many have been condemned ; as worthy and good men and as useful Subjects as those who condemned them ; and they look upon it as a sin deserving Punishment as the Law directs. But they neither knew what Heresy is (for they imagined it to be any thing contrary to Acts of Parliament and Convocation) nor could they know what is not true, that by the law of God

(*a*) Politici qui sæpe dogmata vera a falsis salubria a noxiis non norunt distinguere omnia nova suspecte habent.
Grot. in Act. xvii. 6.

they have any right to punish a heretick when they find him. But they received their notions from Rome, and do not care to part with their *de facto* power in this respect, though they have none *de jure*.

It is true, that the fundamental Principles of Protestantism were at first very consistently maintain'd by Luther and other Reformers; but those Principles have long ago been deserted by all the Churches in pursuit of power and dominion. It is true, that our Whig Ministers have nobly at several times, both in Theory and Practice, maintain'd the Principles of Civil and Religious liberty, but they have been no less liable than the Reformed Churches to be tempted from the practice they approved.

Another thing which they received from Rome, as Rome did from the Asiatick Churches, is a Subscription to Articles of Religion of human Composition, by Clergy, Physicians, and other Graduates, and lately, if not at present, by Children, &c. imagining, as must be supposed, that the Faith of a Protestant Church must be an unalterable System of Articles, which when once fixed must be always adhered to; than which nothing can be more contrary to the Religion of the People, and the very nature of a Protestant Church, which receives the *Scripture*, and not *its own decisions*, as a complete Rule of Faith: and must therefore, if she would pre-
b 2
serve

serve the very essential and fundamental Principle of her Faith, alter her opinion of particular doctrines, as the Scripture by which they are to be explained is better understood.—On the other hand, to bind them up by a Subscription to the opinion of former ages, would make the fundamental Principle of Protestantism absolutely void, and the Scripture itself of no farther use: it would be tantamount to a declaration, that thus far the people shall improve, and no farther; thus far they shall use the Scripture as a Rule of Faith, and no farther; thus far and no farther shall the people be instructed in the will of God.—Whereas, if (instead of a Subscription at any time to what was formerly thought to be the sense of Scripture, but afterwards found, both by Clergy and Laity, not to be so,) the Clergy shall promise, (as they now do, when Candidates for Priests orders,) that they will instruct the People out of the Scriptures, and teach nothing but what they are persuaded may be concluded and proved from thence: And if these Candidates for holy Orders shall be subjected to the examination of the Bishops (who must be supposed to be Masters of every improvement in the interpretation of Scripture doctrines as soon as it is known) what can the People wish for more? Any farther Security, that the genuine doctrines of the Gospel shall be preached to them without addition or curtail, is not within the power of man to provide.

But

But why a Subscription should be required of the Laity of some professions, and not of others, or why it is not equally required of them all, whether male or female, as it is at Rome, (in order to prevent Heresy,) is not very easy to explain; and is worth considering: for as it is at present, we seem to have adopted the practice without examining why or wherefore; and do things by halves, as if we were not fully convinced, that we were acting right: Whereas the Romanists go through with the matter, by their Capital Laws against heresy, in which all, both male and female, are equally concerned; and this shews, that these Subscriptions were not originally intended for the Clergy only, as is now pretended by some writers, but for all men in general.

If, after all, it should still be thought necessary to preach agreeably to the Articles, which were framed some ages ago, notwithstanding the new light which has been thrown upon the doctrines of Scripture by the study of the learned within the two last Centuries, and which the people, who maintain the Clergy, have a right to be acquainted with; the People are not used honestly and fairly. This is not to preach the Gospel agreeably to the Rule of Faith, for which the Clergy are paid, but according to the Commandments of men, which the people object to.—And if by this mean the People should open
their

their Eyes to the Truth, and the Clergy be obliged to keep theirs shut, what must be the consequence, but that the people will understand their Religion in a more perfect manner than the Clergy will dare to teach it; and so the knowledge of the Laity will bring on the Contempt of the Clergy; and the People at length leave the Churches.

I shall venture here to use the words of Mr. Wm. Pitt, when speaking of our happy Constitution, and apply them to the Church in particular. “I am afraid the Reverence and Enthusiasm which Englishmen entertain for the Church of England, will, if not suddenly prevented, be the means of destroying it: for such is their Enthusiasm, that they will not remove its defects, for fear of touching its Beauty.” Lond. Even. No. 9371.

“Neither Magna Charta, nor the Revolution, “was perfect any more than the Reformation,” says a Writer in the Lond. Journal. “The “house of Lords in Charles the II^d’s time gloriously opposed the Bill for obliging them to “swear they would never make, or attempt to “make, any alterations in Church or State, well “knowing there might arise just occasions for “alterations, and that our Constitution did not “consist of unalterable Laws, but in the nature of “our Legislature, and a power lodged in Kings, “Lords, and Commons to make such alterations
“tions

“ tions as Reason and the circumstances of affairs
 “ require.” And the present knowledge of the
 Laity instructs us wherein the Alterations with
 regard to the Church of England should be
 made.

Those who have a just notion of Protestantism
 are no longer to be satisfied with human deci-
 sions in matters of Faith. They know, that the
 Apostacy from Scripture, from the testimony of
 Jesus, from the Commandments of God, from
 the Spirit of Truth, from the Apostles and Pro-
 phets, to the Traditions and Commandments of
 men, to the Rudiments of this World; hath for
 many Centuries been accompanied with blasphem-
 y, idolatry, and persecution. For ages, were
 the People deceived by their Teachers in giving
 them the decrees of Fathers and Councils as of
 divine Authority. And instead of convincing
 them by arguments, (as the Protestant Divines
 did in King James the IId's Reign,) they deter-
 red them authoritatively from the disbelief of
 their decrees by the threats of Damnation, which
 we find at the end of their Creeds.—But all un-
 derstanding Protestants know, that these ana-
 themas hurt none but those who use them; and
 that neither Fathers, nor Councils have any Au-
 thority for such Execrations. But as these days
 of Ignorance and Presumption we hope are now
 over; and both Clergy and Laity now lift up
 their eyes to Scripture; and allow of no Autho-
 rity

rity in matters of faith but what can be proved from holy writ, as the Articles declare; to what purpose can a Subscription to human Articles be required rather than a Subscription to the Scripture itself; a fallible rather than an infallible Guide?

But some well wishers to the Church of England will argue, that a Subscription to the Articles of the Church will preserve the Faith of the Church. It may be so; but should the Faith of the Church be preserved where it is erroneous? Where it contradicts the known Truths of the Gospel, upon which Gospel the belief of every particular doctrine is founded, and by which it is to be explained?—The faith of the Church before the Reformation was Papistical: and the same Argument of preserving the Faith of the Church, will reach up to those times, and prove that we ought to continue in that Faith.—But the honour of the Church of England does not consist in never altering its opinion upon particular doctrines, but in her steady adherence to the word of God, and her having altered her opinion of particular doctrines by that Rule, till she is the most perfect of all human establishments, and lies open to further Perfection, by adopting every improvement in the knowledge of divine Truth: and God knows there are very many material difficulties in the Scripture which still remain to be explained; though none that are necessary to Salvation.

It

It may perhaps be answered to this, that the Articles to be subscribed may be altered from what they now are, and amended by the learned members of the Church; which many wise and good men have wished to see done.—But to what purpose is it to frame Articles for subscription which will always be defective? Is it not better not to subscribe to them? especially as it will be always so difficult to get the proper alterations; and we have an infallible Rule already, from whence they must be taken, which wants no altering.—And let them be drawn up in ever so great conformity to the present notions, yet, unless we cease to study the Scripture and to improve in the knowledge of the Truth, the difficulty will be continually returning; except we transcribe verbatim out of the infallible Rule of Scripture; and we must either alter continually or Subscribe to what we know to be false. For such is the unavoidable consequence of admitting two Rules of Faith, the one human, and the other divine; that they will never long agree; but the one must give way to the other, or the whole System taken together will be confusion and inconsistency: in which the Christian Verity will contradict the Catholick Religion; or in other words, the Religion of Christ will contradict the Religion of Men.

There is a farther inconvenience attending the Churches which presume to alter the words of

Scripture, till they speak their own fallible opinions, which is, that their enemies will take the advantage of their precipitancy, and instead of laying the blame upon the Churches, will endeavour to remove it to the Rule itself, i. e. the Scripture. And sure enough the fault must be in one or other of them, if any Error is established.

Accordingly, Mr. John Potter, among the rest of his Crudities, argues as follows. “ The
 “ New Testament in 1562 fixed the Church of
 “ England on Calvinistical principles; and the
 “ same New Testament in 1742 would [proba-
 “ bly] fix the Church of England upon Armini-
 “ an principles: and both of them respectively
 “ said to be the doctrine of the New Testament
 “ by as great and distinguished men of Genius,
 “ piety, and abilities, as those RESPECTIVE
 “ ages have produced.”

From hence Mr. Potter concludes, that the New Testament cannot be a Rule of Faith. But this is all misrepresentation. It was not the New Testament that fixed the Church of England upon Calvinistical principles (if the XXXIX Articles are such) but the Archbishops and Bishops, and the rest of the Clergy, if the Title to the Articles be true: and surely it does not follow, that the New Testament is no Rule of Faith, because the Archbishops, &c. mistook the sense of it in those Articles.—And further, suppose
 the

the Archbishops, &c. have now altered their opinions upon these Articles, I would then ask this sophistical writer, whether they have not done it upon the authority of the New Testament as they now understand it? And if this be the Truth ; the consequence of Mr. Potter's observation is the very reverse to what he has made it, viz. That the New Testament was the Rule they mean'd to go by in both cases ; Though in one Case they were mistaken in the true sense of it : And the change of their Opinion upon these Articles is so far from a fault, that they could not do otherwise, consistently with their Religion, whenever their RESPECTIVE age, or any other advantageous circumstance, discovered to them, that the true sense of Scripture was different from what their Predecessors judged it to be. Their change of Opinion is therefore commendable ; and the only fault lies in the method taken by their Predecessors to prevent it, by fixing down the faith of the Church to their mistakes.

The best thing that can be said of any Articles is, that they are taken or copied from the Scripture ; and to imagine the correcting the Copy from the Original can render it less valuable, and look upon such an improvement to be a change of Religion, is a great mistake : for as long as we agree in the authority of the original from whence the Copy is supposed to be taken ;

or in other words, as long as we join to Christ as the head of the Church, the Religion is the same, however corrupted or improved in particular doctrines. For the Apostacy or change of Religion does not arise from mistaking the sense of the Original, but from preferring the Copy to the Original, and thereby establishing for doctrines the commandments of men. And every Church runs the Chance of doing this, when in framing their Articles, they leave the words of Scripture to follow their fallible interpretations of it.

These loose hints are meant to be enlarged upon in the following pages with this important Truth in view: that there can be no other **CENTER of UNITY** among Christians or Christian Churches, but the Scripture only, agreeably to the Reasoning of the Apostles on the Subject.

St. Paul says, that we being many, are one bread and one body, because we partake of that one bread, I. Cor. x. 17—This is farther explained by St. John, ch. xv. “As the Branch cannot bear fruit unless it abide in the Vine, so neither can ye unless ye abide in me; I am the *Vine*, ye are the *Branches*.” Now the Branches are no otherwise joined to *one another*, than as they are all joined to the *Vine*. In like manner, Christ is said to be “the Head; from whom the whole Body is fitly joined together, Eph. iv. 16. and having nourishment ministred,
in-

increaseth," &c.—The Union here does not consist in the members being joined to one another, but in the Union of them all with the Head: and still more fully in the 7th verse; If ye abide in me, and my *words* abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, &c.

It is therefore from the Union of every individual Person of the Church with Christ himself, by his WORDS abiding in them, that the Church is formed, and that the *Communion of Saints* consists, and by which they receive proper nourishment: and consequently, all notion of Communion with one another in any other way, is vain and idle; since no agreement among themselves can supply them with spiritual food; and it is only HIS WORDS abiding in them which will constitute them the members of his Body, the Christian Church, and not of a distinct society. So that if every Member of every one of the Councils had signed the same Articles; yet, if these were not Scripture doctrines, it might prove their Communion with one another, but not one of them to be a member of the Christian Church. The Christian *κοινωνία*, or Communion of Saints, as it consists in their all partaking of the One Bread, being Branches of the same Vine, Members of the same Head, consists in their being all joined to Christ and receiving Nourishment from him by his WORDS abiding in them; and

and thus they cannot form the Communion of Saints, and constitute the universal Church by any other agreement among them, or by subscribing to any set of articles they can possibly compose.

After saying thus much upon the nature of Christian Communion, it would be in vain to think of clearing myself from the Suspicion of the sagacious Dr. Randolph, who, speaking of Ben Mordecai's letters, uses this bitter Sarcastm, *I suspected him to be of their own Fraternity.*—Now though this does not inform me what Fraternity he means, yet as I suppose he is speaking of some Christian Fraternity, and I clame a Relation to them all as Brethren, who eat of the same Bread, and drink of the same Cup, notwithstanding their mistakes in the interpretation of Scripture; I must be obliged to plead guilty to the accusation.—For though I differ in opinion in some particular doctrines from every Sect I know of, i. e. wherever they appear to me to mistake the genuine doctrines of Scripture, whether they be Socinians, or Arians, or Sabellians, or Athanasians, or Pseudo-Athanasians, &c. yet as they all agree with me in receiving the Scripture as the Rule of their Faith, and keep the head, which is Christ, I cannot find in my heart to disclame my Relationship to any of them. I can see no reason to bear them any ill will, or wish them any harm

harm in their fortunes, persons, or characters; I meet with worthy and pious men among them all, and can't help rejoicing when I find the family of Christ increases, though they may not perhaps be all perfectly orthodox in any one man's opinion except their own. I honour and esteem every man who labours to explain the Scripture agreeably to the divine attributes, though he differs ever so much from myself in the method of doing it. And heartily enjoy the noble and liberal Sentiment of Socrates, who, being condemned for his Religious principles, consoles himself in the hope, that after Death he shall converse with *wise* men upon the difficult points of Philosophy, as he used to do, without incurring the danger of another Condemnation.— And, in short, while some are for narrowing the Bonds of Communion by zeal, avarice, or ambition, as Bishop Hoadly speaks, I am proud to consider myself as related in Christ Jesus to every Christian Fraternity in the world, and to every individual among them.

But least my mistakes should be attributed to others, I must here add, that I am only confessing the Faith for myself, and not for any Fraternity; and therefore in what follows in this Pamphlet, I must beg the Reader to consider it merely as coming from the heart of an individual, who believes what he asserts, and is ready to disavow any part of it which shall be proved to be false.

FARTHER

I have been thinking of you very much lately
and wondering how you are getting on.
I hope you are well and happy.
I have been very busy lately
but I have managed to find some time
to write you a few lines.
I have been thinking of you very much lately
and wondering how you are getting on.
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I have been very busy lately
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I have been thinking of you very much lately
and wondering how you are getting on.
I hope you are well and happy.
I have been very busy lately
but I have managed to find some time
to write you a few lines.

Yours truly,
F. W. L. L.

FARTHER THOUGHTS

ON THE GRAND APOSTACY, &c.

IN a former pamphlet I have endeavoured to mark out the first traces of the grand Apostacy foretold by the Apostles, and its progress for many ages: but proposing at the same time to answer Mr. Gibbon, as he led the way through his five imaginary causes of the rapid progress of the Christian church, I could not preserve a regular Chronology of the times in which the several events happened which are there mentioned: I shall therefore be obliged to repeat some things in order of time, which have been spoken of before, as they happened to fall in with Mr. Gibbon's arguments.

The begining of the Apostacy from the genuine doctrines of Christ was owing to the Gnos-

B

ticks

ticks in the time of the Apostles, and to the Tatianists and Cataphrygians afterwards, who introduced abstinence from Marriage, frequent fastings, and Holy-days, and other *forms of Godliness without the power thereof*. It began to work, as Sir Isaac Newton tells us, in the disciples of Simon Menander, Carpocrates, Cerinthus, and such kind of men, who had imbibed the metaphysical philosophy of the Gentiles and Cabalistical Jews, then called Gnosticks: Eusebius adds Saturninus and Basilides (*a*). But the greatest danger to the Christian church in those early times, arose from the hypocrisy of liars, who endeavoured to defend the *Truth* by *Falsity*; for what Satan could not obtain by open assault, says Dr. Owen, he gradually did obtain in defence of Truth (*b*). To this purpose they endeavoured to accommodate the Christian doctrines to the then reigning philosophy of the Platonists, and thereby corrupted them. They dressed up supposititious pieces containing the most subtle and refined philosophy, (such as the new testament every where avoids), and published them under the names of Dionysius the Areopagite, Clemens Romanus, and many others; to make it appear that the first Christians were not so illiterate as was represented. To the same purpose of propagating the truths of Christianity they not

(*a*) Euseb. Eccles. Hist. IV. 7.

(*b*) Page 34.

only falsified the scripture where they disapproved of it, but forged whole Gospels, Epistles and Revelations which they imposed upon the world as the writings of the Apostles, and not to appear inferior to the heathens in respect to their pretended miracles, and the power of their Demons; they impiously attested to the performance of lying wonders and miracles wrought by the saints and martyrs and their relicts, and thereby made way for the doctrine of many mediators and prayers to the dead; and then defended their idolatry by pretended traditions, visions, and revelations; and at length by confiscation, imprisonment and death.

In the mean time we find, that as the judgments of God on the one hand kept pace with these corruptions in the churches, (by their sufferings under the persecution of the Jews, and heathen Emperors; which separated the wheat from the chaff, and prevented the church from being overrun by hypocrites :) so on the other hand it must appear very plain from history, (as we find it likewise foretold in the Revelation of St. John,) that the persecuters themselves were severely punished for their injustice and inhumanity by famine, sword and pestilence.—After the destruction of Jerusaleem upon the rebellion of the Jews in Egypt and Cyprus, in the reign of Adrian, the Jews put to death 460,000 men, and were conquered with the loss of 1000 cities

cities and fortresses, and above 580,000 Jews were slain without reckoning the loss of the Romans; this happened from the year 100 to 140—after this we hear of a great famine in the reign of the Antonines to the year 193; and a pestilence under Maximin and Valerian, and all these judgments were united during the reign of Maximus, Decius, Gallus, Volusenus, and Valerian; during which time there were about four persecutions in 30 years; which reaches to the year 270; another persecution began about the year 302 and lasted 10 years; soon after which the dominion of the heathens was taken out of the way, and the Roman empire came into the hand of the Christians; and by this great change the colleges of the Pontifices and Augurs and Vestals, and all the pagan priests and religious officers throughout the Empire were brought under the dominion of a Christian prince; many of the officers both civil and military were displaced, and Christians put in their room; and a thorough alteration was made in the government(c). This was brought about by the victories of Constantine over Maxentius in 312. “ So that in his “ reign and his son’s one half of the Roman Empire turned Christian; but the whole was not “ accomplish’d till the reign of Gratian, who re-

(c) Daubuz. Lowman on the Revel. pa. 57. The fall of this Empire is described in Prophetic language, Rev. vi. 12.

“ jected the dignity and habit of the pontifex
 “ maximus, threw down the idols, interdicted
 “ the sacrifices, and took away the revenues
 “ with the salaries and authority of the Priests.
 “ Theodosius the Great followed his example,
 “ and Heathenism afterwards recovered itself no
 “ more, but decreased so fast, that Prudentius
 “ about 10 years after the death of Theodosius
 “ calls them *vix pauca ingenia & pars hominum*
 “ *rarissima* (*d*).”

It might have been reasonably expected upon
 Constantine's coming to the empire in 306,
 that the church would for the future have en-
 joyed a state of peace and safety, and that pure
 Christianity and virtue would from thenceforth
 flourish. But this happy state was imaginary;
 the Apostacy had gained too much ground.
 The chief men of the Church had apostatised to
 the worship of Demons, and a multiplicity of
 mediators; and their powers were bent to de-
 fend these doctrines, and in this attempt they
 lost all the appearance of love and forbearance:
 and not content with such punishments as might
 affect their adversaries in this world, did what
 they could by excommunications, and anathe-
 mas, to condemn both body and soul in hell.

Constantine would at first have appeased this
 madness, as appears by his excellent letter to
 Alexander and Arius upon their disputes (*e*): but

(*d*) Sir I. Newton, 293. (*e*) Translated in the Ap-
 pendix to Ben Mordecai's VIIIth Letter.

it was not in his power. On the contrary, He was drawn into the whirl-pool and became a persecuter himself; and after his death, his son Constantius was as furious against the Athanasians, as his father had been against the Arians: so that both Sects were persecuted by turns. One Council was called to annul what a former one had decreed: and having lost sight of Scripture, the whole was managed with such contention and fury, as if they had laboured to make the church a slaughter house. From this time the Apostacy introduced by private men, began to be established by Emperors and Councils, and thereby the most fatal blow was given to the Christian Church that it has ever experienced, by establishing at the Council of Nice, that the Son is of the same Substance with the Father (f); from whence it unavoidably followed, in direct contradiction to the whole tenor of the Gospel, that the Son was not capable of ascending or descending, or Suffering, or Death: the Substance of the Father being incapable of all these things (g).—From this time the best and the most learned of the Fathers have been so bewildered in these palpable contradictions, that Dr. Meric Casaubon declares

(f) How this was managed by the Athanasians see Ben. Mordecai, Let. VIII. p. 24. See also the Preface to that Letter.

(g) See Ben. Mord. Let. III. Postscript, p. 113, 114.

of

of one of them only, (*“ whether the Lord and
 “ governor of the world, who fills the universe,
 “ was concealed in the body of an Infant,”*) that
 it contains an Objection against Christianity
 the most considerable that ever was made, and
 which hath kept more people from embracing the
 Christian Faith than any that he knew (*b*)—But
 what was a still worse consequence; this doc-
 trine, which was understood in different senses,
 even by those who voted for it, when it came to
 be explained, produced many divisions, which
 were called heresies, and looked upon as Crimes,
 and these divisions produced Persecution.

“ Since the Nicene Council,” says Hilary,
 “ we do nothing but write Creeds, and while
 “ we quarrel about words, while we raise ques-
 “ tions about Novelties, while we fight about
 “ ambiguities, and about Authors, and strive
 “ about parties; while there is difficulty in
 “ consent, while we anathematize one another;
 “ scarce any one is Christ’s. What a change
 “ there was in last year’s Creed! the first de-
 “ creed the Homousios should not be men-
 “ tioned: the next decrees and publishes it;
 “ the third, does by indulgence, excuse the
 “ word *Usia*, as used before by the Fathers
 “ uncompounded: the fourth does not excuse,
 “ but condemn it: it is come to that pass,
 “ that nothing [professed] among us, or those

(*b*) Ben Mord. Let. I. pa. 42.

“ before us, remains sacred and inviolable.
 “ We decree annual and monthly Creeds con-
 “ cerning God: we repent of our decrees, we
 “ defend those that repent of them; we ana-
 “ thematize those whom we defended: we
 “ defend other mens opinions in our own; and
 “ condemn our own in those of other men: and
 “ while we bite one another, we are consumed
 “ one of another.” How natural and unavoid-
 able does all this follow from leaving the
 Scripture, and trusting to the decrees of Coun-
 cils and the Commandments of Men! And
 from the time that the Nicene Creed was
 huddled up, as Episcopius expresses it (*i*),
 and the doctrines of the Church depended
 upon the Votes and Management of the Coun-
 cils, “ Christianity became a mysterious, dark,
 “ incomprehensible, unintelligible Religion,
 “ loaded with the Inventions of Men. It
 “ consisted of artificial sounds and doctrines
 “ of men in power, and all the Engines of
 “ Authority were made use of to force an
 “ obedience to what they could not under-
 “ stand (*k*). And accordingly this whole Period
 of about 400 years, under the Christian Em-
 perors, is filled with abominable Superstition,
 Idolatry, and cruel Persecution, exercised with
 the greatest fury by Christians against Christians,
 under the name of Arians, Athanasians, Euty-

(*i*) Ben Mord. Let. I. pa.

(*k*) Dr. Sykes.

chians.

chians, &c. which occasioned St. John to wonder with so much admiration(*l*). These Persecutions, and the punishments of the Persecutors, takes up a great part of the Apocalypse.

It was during the dominion of the Christian Emperors, that the learned Lady Hypatia was barbarously murdered by the monks and friends of Cyril; and Nestorius, who had persecuted the Arians and Novatians with such zeal, that Constantinople was almost in an uproar, fell himself under persecution and was deposed for denying the Virgin Mary to be the mother of God. It was during the Christian Emperors that Priscillian, a Spanish Bishop, and his adherents were murdered by Maximus in 455; and Justinian, not to be behind hand with his Predecessors in Christian zeal, thought it his duty to exterminate all sects from the Empire, and in that opinion desolated whole provinces, and almost drove Christianity out of the world. This period was famous for the persecution of the Monothelites, for believing that Christ had only *one will*; and for deposing Childeric King of France, by the Pope, and giving his Kingdom to Pepin; and establishing the worship of Images. In the mean time the persecuting family of Constantine the Great became extinct in a very few years. The Empire was invaded by the northern nations, and Rome itself was taken by

(*l*) Rev. xvii. 6.

Alaric King of the Goths. The ravages in Italy put an end to the western Empire in 476. Basiliscus in the East was an Arian, Zeno an Eutychian, Genferic in Africk an Arian and persecutor of the Catholic Church, Eurich the same in Gaul, Odoacer in Italy, and the Kings of Spain asserters of the same Heresy, and the Eutychians in the East^(m). And thus by the just judgment of God the Persecuted became superior to their Persecutors, who had shed so much blood to no purpose. Lastly, it was during this period that Dr. Prideaux observes, “ God permitted the success of the Saracens in his all-wise providence to continue a scourge to us Christians, who have so holy a Religion and will not live according to it.” It was, as Mr. Mede observes, “ at the time when we began to serve other Gods, that God gave the Christians over to serve other nations, and the Turkish fury could never be stayed from casting more and more this bondage upon our necks, till the Reformed Churches began to put away their Idols.” It was according to the judgment by which the Christians had judged of others who differed from them, that they were judged themselves, and with the measure they did mete, it was measured to them again; according to the words of the Angel, Rev. xvi. 6. “ Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and

(m) Echard's Rom. Hist.

which wast, and which shalt be, because thou hast judged thus, For they have shed the blood of Saints and of Prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink for they are worthy."

The heathen Roman Empire had its trial for about 300 years, during which time Christianity had been preached among them; but instead of listning to the Truth, they used their power in persecuting its Preachers, whom St. John in the Apocalypse entitles the two Witnesses. The Dominion was then transferred to the Christians themselves. And *they*, instead of reforming the errors of the Apostacy, established them by their Councils, and defended them by confiscations, banishment, imprisonment and death.

700. At length, after the Christian Emperors had been tried for about 450 years, a new Power arose, and the dominion over the Church was given into the hands of a Christian Bishop; Rome began again to flourish after it had been deprived of its power for 200 years, and began to enjoy Dominion in its last form of Government under the Pope; And here, if ever, the sincere Christian, one would imagine, must have expected a safety from persecution, and a restoration from all the Errors of the Apostacy. This dominion we are informed by St. John and the Prophet Daniel is to last 1260 years.

The power of the Pope was transferred to him in a great measure by Charles the Great, the grandson of Charles Martel, and son of Pepin, who sat upon the Western Empire by the Pope's means. Charles the Great overthrew the Lombards, and gave some of their Cities to the Pope, and about the year 800 conferred on him the dutchy of Rome, by which he became exalted above the Roman Senate and all human Judicature; and this gave him a Supremacy over the Western Churches, which, as Sir Isaac Newton observes, gave him a look more stout than his fellows (Dan. vii. 20) and enabled him to grapple with the Emperor himself; till at length he overtopped him, and gained an absolute power over all Christian Princes(*n*); and the ten kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was divided in, France, Spain, Britain, &c. gave him their strength and power(*o*). For God hath put it into their hearts to give their kingdom unto the Beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled(*p*).

The Pope now began to canonize Saints of his own making, and to grant indulgencies and pardons for the most atrocious sins; and the kissing the Pope's feet became a custom(*q*). Charles confirm'd the Exarchate to the Pope, and propagated the Roman Religion in all his

(*n*) Sir Is. Newton, p. 85.

(*o*) Rev. xvii. 13.

(*p*) Ver. 17.

(*q*) Sir I. Newton, 85, 86.

conquests,

conquests, obliging the Saxons and Huns to receive it, distributing his northern Conquests into Bishopricks, granting Tythes to the Clergy and Peter-pence to the Pope: by all which the Church of Rome was highly enlarged, exalted and established.—His power, his presumption, and his cruelty grew up together, and assisted each other in carrying the Apostacy to the amazing height it has done, so as to become the wonder of the world.—In this age, says Spanheim, what by civil and military calamities, by the indulgence of Princes, the vices of the Clergy, the ambition of the Priests, the sloth of the monks, a foul and truly antichristian corruption prevailed in doctrine, worship, manners, and discipline(r).

By the help of dreams, visions, apparitions, and persecutions, the worship of the image of Christ and the holy virgin and holy angels was ordained by a Council of Constantinople, and the contrary opinion anathematized. The Pope's supremacy gained ground daily: The title of Western Empire was taken from the Greeks by the Pope's authority for Heresy; a power asserted by him of excommunicating and depriving the Emperor, and to absolve men of their Oaths; and decrees made that none should judge the Pope, nor Emperors nor Kings judge Priests.

(r) Hist. Eccles. Sæcul. ix. c. 5. p. 1343.

So that the Popes became quite scandalous. Lando is declared by Baronius and Binius to be an invader, a thief, a robber; and the accusations against John XII(s), by the Cardinals, Bishops, Priests and Deacons are for debauchery, murder, perjury and incest with two of his Sisters; for which he was deposed. And the wickedness of the Clergy was got to such a height, that the decree of the Council of Nice, which allowed them to dwell with a mother or Sister, was reversed upon evidence that they lay with their Sisters and had children by them. A consequence this of their hypocritical abstinence from marriage!

About 872 John the VIII. gave the Empire to Charles the Bald in prejudice of Lewis of Germany, the elder branch, who thereupon gave up many rights of the Gallican Church, and promised by oath to protect the Pope against all persons; and Marinus, in the beginning of his popedom in 882, decreed, that Popes should be made without expecting the Emperors authority.

900. During this and the next Century, from the death of Lewis the Pious, son of Charles the Great, in 840, till the settlement of the German Empire in 962, under Otho, the many calamities in the family of Charles the Great so weakened the Empire, as to expose it to the invasions

(s) Lowman, 177. Baxter's Ch. Hist. 325.

of the Normans(*t*), particularly in France; whilst the Saracens ravaged Italy, and made excursions to the gates of Rome, and carried off the riches of the Churches—and the Normans from a desire of plunder fell into the richest provinces; and their false zeal for their religion (for they were then Heathens) made them cruel and bloody, especially to Churchmen. From Sea to Sea there was not a monastery that did not feel their rage, nor a town that was not ransomed, pillaged and burn'd two or three times; which, says the historian Mezeray, made it sufficiently evident that it was one of God's terrible plagues(*u*).

During this Century, Paschale taught the doctrine of the real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; which was confirmed by pretended miracles; and Odo, a Bishop of Canterbury, is said to have changed the bread and wine into flesh and blood, and then changed them back again(*x*).

1000. The burning Hereticks was set on foot at Orleans by King Robert and the Prelates. Benedict IX. set up Transubstantiation, which was afterwards established by Innocent III. at the Council of Lateran in 1215. A prodigious superstition spread every where among all sorts of people, pretended Miracles and ap-

(*t*) Lowman on the Revel. pa. 177. (*u*) Ibid from Mezerai vol. I. p. 319. (*x*) Ibid 151, from Wm. of Malmibury.

paritions and Tales of souls in Purgatory, &c. and the whole of religion was placed in penances, masses, legacies to redeem souls out of purgatory, and pilgrimages, especially to the holy sepulchre at Jerufalem, which ended at last in the holy war; during which the blood they shed in their persecutions was abundantly repaid by the loss of many hundred thousand men.

1073. Hildebrand or Gregory VII. expressly claim'd the power of deposing Emperors and absolving subjects from their allegiance, and exercised it against Henry IV. and other Princes in Europe(y). In 1076 he excommunicated the Emperor and all his adherents, and gave the Kingdom of Germany to Rodolphus. About this time the Bogomili were burn'd by the Patriarch of Constantinople.

1100. The claims of the Popes and Emperors about investitures divided the Guelphs and Gibelines, and engag'd all Italy in a civil war, which lasted above 100 years; in which there was scarce a family that did not shed one another's blood. Innocent the III. excommunicated King John of England, and interdicted the Kingdom for 6 years. There was another Crusade in this year, and another in 1192; and at length what was contended for was obliged to be left to the Mahometans.

(y) Lowman, ib. 179.

At the latter end of this Century, in 1198, Innocent III. sent his Legates to suppress the Albigenfes, and excite the Princes and People to exterminate them by a Crusade. These cross bearers were not less than 500,000. They took Beziers, and put 60,000 to the sword.

1200. This Century is famous for erecting the Inquisition, the most unjust and barbarous Court of judicature that ever was instituted. When the witnesses to the truth, (who happened then to be the Sectaries) were not to be silenced by Dominick and his brethren preachers, the civil Magistrate was persuaded to burn all such as were judged to be obstinate Hereticks: and that they might do this legally the 4th Council of Lateran, in 1215, did decree, that all hereticks should be delivered to the secular power to be extirpated: the goodly office *this*, of the unnatural alliance between Church and State, by which the grand Apostacy is perfected and established, and the Kingdom of darkness is defended by the civil power, the Commands of Christ superseded by the canons of the church, and the most horrid cruelties committed under the pretence of saving mens Souls, and preserving the Peace of the Church.

This Council of Lateran anathematizes all heresy, and by its decrees, every Officer of the secular power is obliged to swear, that they will exterminate all hereticks denoted by the Church;

D

and

and whatever temporal Lord, being warned by the Church, shall neglect to purge his country in this manner, shall be excommunicated; and if he continue so a year, the Pope may pronounce his Vassals absolved from their fidelity, and expose his Country to be seized on by Catholics; and whosoever shall not avoid the excommunicated person, shall be excommunicated himself. The people are to be put to their Oaths whether they know of any Hereticks in their neighbourhood; if they refuse the Oath, are to be looked upon as Hereticks themselves. It is ordered that they suffer none such within their Shires or Circuits to preach, or to keep either house or family, either yet to use any handicraft or occupation, or other trade of merchandize, or else to solace themselves any ways, or frequent the company of Christian men (z).

In performance of the Laws and decrees of this Council, multitudes, called hereticks, have suffered, some say two millions. And thus Rome, under the appearance of a Christian Church, has been built up and maintained by blood, rebellion, and usurpation. In the beginning of this Century, Pope Honorius procured a new expedition to Jerusalem, and his successor commanded the Emperor Frederick to go thither: but he was obliged to return, because the Pope in the mean time had taken his

(z) Lowman on the Rev. 148. Baxter's Ch. Hist. 398.

Cities in his absence ; and endeavoured to betray him to the Soldan(*a*). The war of the Guelphs and Gibelines continued, and a plague broke out in Rome which scarce left every tenth man.

The speech of Innocent IV. upon receiving a letter from Robert Groshead, Bishop of Lincoln, shews to what a height of pride the Pope was arrived ; it is related by Matthew Paris, as follows ; “ Who is this doating old Fool, says
 “ the Pope, who boldly and rashly judgeth my
 “ doing ? by St. Peter and St. Paul, if our in-
 “ nate ingenuity did not move us, I would pre-
 “ cipitate him into so great confusion that he
 “ should be to the whole world a fable, a stupor,
 “ an amazement, and a prodigy : Is not the
 “ King of England our Vassal, and I say more,
 “ our Slave, who can with our Nod imprison
 “ him, and enslave him to reproach (*b*) ? ”

This Century is famous for the Sicilian Vespers, when the French were murdered through the whole Island, 8000 were slain in two hours ; The Women ripped up, and the childrens brains dashed out ; in which Pope Nicholas had the chief hand, though it was executed after his death.

1300. Great distresses fell upon Rome itself by the Wars of the Guelphs and Gibelines. Clement V. is obliged to retire to Avignon in

(*a*) Baxt. Ch. Hist. 399.

(*b*) Baxter, 411.

France, where the Court of Rome continued above 90 years.

1400. During this Century it was decreed in the Council of Constance, that though Christ administered the sacrament to his disciples in both kinds, viz. bread and wine, and though in the primitive Church the faithful received it in both kinds, &c. yet the contrary custom of the Church should be a Law. Sess. 13.

It was likewise decreed, that they might proceed against hereticks, notwithstanding the safe conduct and promises of the Emperor, Kings or Princes; by whatever bond they had bound themselves therein; though the hereticks had not appeared, but upon that safe conduct: and that the said Emperor, &c. having done what in them lieth, are no way obliged by their promises. [Principles which a Heathen would blush to maintain.] And by this breach of promise John Hus, and Jerom of Prague were circumvented and burnt.

In 1492 Alexander VI. was made Pope, one of the worst of men; and, if there was any one who exceeded him in abominable crimes, it was his bastard, Cæsar Borgia (*d*). This Period is remarkable for the long wars in Italy, Germany, France and Spain, occasioned by a Scism in the Papacy, there being three Popes at the same time, and by their persecutions and murders,

(*d*) Mezeray.

usur-

usurpations and contentions; by which they were so weakened as to become a prey to the Saracens: and the Eastern Empire by the just judgment of God, was hereby put an end to, and Constantinople was taken in 1453. But the rest of the men who were not slain by these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship Demons (or Saints) and Idols of Gold, and Silver, and Brass, and Stone, and of Wood, which can neither hear, nor see, nor walk; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their Sorceries, nor of their fornication [or Idolatry] nor of their thefts. Rev. ix. 20, 21.

1500. The most surprizing and fatal artifice was now practised which the man of sin had ever yet used; which corrupted the morals of the whole church by means of the holiness of the Saints; and this was brought about, strange as it was, by the ingenuity of the Scholemen, in the following manner. According to the erroneous doctrine of the Roman Church, all the works of the Saints over and above those which are necessary for their own Justification, together with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, are deposited in one inexhaustible treasury. The keys of this were committed to St. Peter and his Successors the Popes, who may open it at pleasure; and by transferring a portion of this superabundant merit to any particular person for a sum

sum of money, may convey to him either a pardon of his own sins, or a release for any one, in whom he is interested, from the pains of Purgatory. Such indulgencies were invented in the eleventh century by Urban the II. as a recompence for those who went in person upon the wild enterprize of conquering the Holy Land, and afterwards to those who hired a soldier to that purpose(*e*): and in progress of time the same indulgences and pardons were given for the taking up arms against those that obey'd not the Church of Rome, although they were Christians(*f*). At length they were hawked about and sold to any body that would buy them, for a mere trifle of money; and as their efficacy was declared to extend to all sins, those who trusted them were hereby set loose from all moral obligations whatsoever, and thought themselves at liberty to indulge in vices which would have heavy lain upon the conscience of a Pagan.

And what added to the scandal hereby brought upon the Church, was the bad lives of the Pardoners, who in taverns and elsewhere, in games and other things not fit to be named, spent that which the People spared from their necessary expences to purchase these indulgences.

(*e*) Robertson's Hist. of Cha. V. pa. 79.
 Father Paul's Coun. of Trent, by Bret. pa. 4.

(*f*) Fa-

The wickedness of the Man of Sin thus threatening to overwhelm the whole Christian world in immorality, and debauchery, under the veil of religious sanctity, (in which has consisted the hypocrisy of liars from the beginning) the providence of God raised up the spirit of Martin Luther to oppose the danger, and lay the foundation of a Reformation in the Church, both in her Faith and Practice. “ Luther having
 “ found a copy of the Bible, which lay neglected
 “ in the library of his monastery, abandoned all
 “ other pursuits, and devoted himself to the
 “ study of it. He attacked the whole doctrine
 “ of indulgences by arguments founded on rea-
 “ son and scripture; while his adversaries pro-
 “ duced nothing in support of them, but the
 “ sentiments of the Scholemen, the conclusions
 “ of the Canon-law, and the decrees of the
 “ Popes. And from hence arose the sect of
 “ Protestants, so called from a solemn Protest
 “ which was made against a decree in the
 “ Church of Rome in 1550(g): who rejected
 “ *all human authority whatsoever*, and allowed
 “ of none but that of Scripture:” And, if they had kept to their principles, would certainly have put an end to the apostacy, and restored to Christ the sovereign dominion over his subjects in his own Kingdom, (which the Christian Bishops had so long usurped) and would have

(g) Robertson's Hist. pa. 62.

fixed Christianity upon the firm Basis of divine Revelation, unmixed with human inventions; for the doctrines of the Reformation spread so fast, that it was thought necessary for its adversaries to call a general Council, as the only effectual means to put an end to their differences. Thereupon a Council met at Trent in 1542, which, after many suspensions and intermissions, ended in 1563. This Council was so managed by the Popes, and so fully confirmed their corruptions, that it was unanimously rejected by all who maintained the necessity of a Reformation(*b*). In this Council, the worship of Images being already settled; the adoration of the sacrament was an easy consequence; and this Council, over and above the adoration of Images and the invocation of Saints, expressly requires the same adoration of the consecrated elements, which is due to the supreme God. Nullus itaque dubitandi locus relinquitur, quin omnes Christiani fideles, pro more in Catholica Ecclesia semper recepto Patriæ cultum, qui vero Deo debetur, huic sanctissimo sacramento in veneratione exhibeant(*i*).—And to strengthen their party, propagate their errors, and gain converts, the Pope, by a Bull dated 1540, erected the new order of Jesuits, who, with

(*b*) See an account of this Council by Father Paul and Le Vassor in Ben. Mord. Letter VIII. pa. 61. (*i*) Conc. Trident. Sect. 13, cap. 5.

this end in view, dispose themselves into every nation, and act with amazing industry: no difficulty which they cannot surmount; no danger so imminent which they will not undergo; no crimes so shocking which they have not perpetrated to serve the cause(k).

By these and such like means, “ the great
 “ work of Satan became easy; which he divid-
 “ ed among the Scholemen and Canonists, who
 “ readily undertook the business.” The Schole-
 men’s task was to defend the power of the Pope,
 and the doctrines he favoured, by disputation
 and argument; and that of the Canonists to
 maintain the Antichristian discipline and sove-
 reignty, by the authority of the Church; urging
 this as the foundation of all Ecclesiastical im-
 positions—And that they might be able to defend
 their Errors by the authority of antiquity, they
 shamefully returned to the practice of the same
 Knavery, which had been used in the early ages;
 and, to prevent the effect of the books which
 had been published by Wickliffe, Luther, and
 other Protestants, the Council of Trent appoin-
 ted certain learned men to gather a catalogue of
 all such writings as should be published contrary
 to that council, declaring that the offenders
 should be severely punished by the inquisition.
 This catalogue was referred to Pope Pius the
 IV (l). who caused it by his Bulls and Breves

(k) Chamber’s Diction. (l) Jenkin’s Hist. Examin.
 of the Authenticity of Councils. See Peck’s Catalogue of
 Writers in King James’s time, No. 207, pa. 5.

to be published with certain rules which he approved : these were added to by Sixtus Quintus and Clement VIII. The design was to smother the Truth, by censuring all sorts of men, and all kind of books, by adding to, or taking from them, or otherwise changing the words or altering the meaning of them. [Thus the decretal Epistles were counterfeited to prop the Pope's spiritual power, and Constantine's donation to support his Temporals.] At Rome, Lisbon, Naples, and the Low Countries, men were appointed for this purpose. And this reformation or expurgation reaches to the MSS(*m*). But what is very unlucky for them, as these Indexes grow and multiply, they vary ; So that what the Inquisitor of one place tolerates, the Inquisitor of another place condemns. Thus all the books they print of the Fathers or others, are altered and mutilated just as they please. Hence it comes to pass, that the later Editions are more and more corrupted.

“ Let any man compare the Editions of the
 “ Councils at Rome with Binius, Binius with
 “ Nicolinus, Nicolinus with Surius, Zerlin,
 “ and Crabbe, and he shall find the latest
 “ prints the worst, and the worst accounted the
 “ best by the Romanists, who never try the

(*m*) James, of the Corruption of the Fathers, 509,
 544.

“ Edi-
 of the Authenticity of Councils. See Beck's Catalogue of
 Writers in King James's time. No. 207, p. 2.

“ Editions or examine the books, but take them
 “ upon the credit of their holy Father the Pope,
 “ or some appointed by him for the oversight or
 “ charge of the books.

“ Erasmus gave the first intelligence of their
 “ barbarous corrupting the Fathers, for which
 “ his very name is in maledictione. But this in-
 “ strument of mischief being now well known,
 “ can no longer deceive any but themselves: the
 “ Protestants are sensible that none of the fathers
 “ are to be depended upon in matters of Faith
 “ in the best Editions of them, and much less
 “ after being mangled at the Vatican. This piece
 “ of chicanery being discovered, was a plain con-
 “ fession and proof of the weakness of their cause,
 “ and a farther demonstration to the Protestants,
 “ that nothing could be depended upon as the
 “ ground of their Faith but Scripture only.

“ The Kingdoms of England, Scotland and
 “ Ireland, the Northern Kingdoms of Sweden
 “ and Denmark, many States of the Empire, the
 “ Cantons of Switzerland, and great numbers in
 “ France, Hungary and Bohemia, firmly adhered
 “ to the Reformation, separated from the Roman
 “ Communion, and absolutely renounced the
 “ Papal authority. In order to suppress these,
 “ the Popes engaged the house of Austria and
 “ other Princes, in wars, invasions, assassinations
 “ and massacres for above 100 years in Germany;
 “ the civil wars in France, the long wars be-

“ tween Spain and the United Provinces, the Spa-
 “ nish Invasion of England, the many attempts
 “ against the life of Queen Elizabeth, the Pow-
 “ der-plot in England, the Massacre of Paris,
 “ the assassinations of Henry III. and Henry
 “ IV. Kings of France, and of the Prince of
 “ Orange the founder of the Dutch Common-
 “ wealth; all which things are recited at large
 “ in history, and recorded as the memorable
 “ Events of those times.”

Agreeably to these undeniable facts, when
 Mr. Chillingworth is showing to Mr. Knot the
 difference between the Popish and Protestant
 Faith, his words are these, “ Following the
 “ Scripture, I shall believe a religion, which
 “ being contrary to flesh and blood, without any
 “ assistance from worldly power, wit and policy;
 “ nay against all the power and policy of the
 “ world, prevailed and enlarged itself in a very
 “ short time all the world over: whereas it is
 “ too too apparent, that your church [viz. the
 “ Roman] hath got, and still maintains her au-
 “ thority over mens consciences, by counterfeit-
 “ ing false miracles, forging false stories, by ob-
 “ truding on the world supposititious writings,
 “ by corrupting the monuments of former
 “ times, and defacing out of them all which any
 “ way makes against you, by wars, by perse-
 “ cutions, by treasons, by rebellions, in short,
 “ by

“ by all manner of carnal weapons whether
 “ violent or fraudulent(*n*).”

At length the Peace and Liberty of the protestant states, were confirmed to the chief Defenders of the Protestant cause, by the treaties of Westphalia or Osnaburgh, and Munster in 1648, notwithstanding the opposition of the Pope, and his protests against them; and hereby a noble opportunity was given by Providence to the Protestant Churches, of quitting entirely their Apostacy, and returning back from philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of this world, from the nominal Orthodoxy and errors of the Councils and Fathers, to the true Faith, the Testimony of Jesus, the commandments of God, and the Spirit of Truth——But the time was not yet come. God grant it may be come now; It certainly never seemed so likely; as it all depends upon the love of religious Liberty and Truth in our Governors. But to return from this delightful prospect,
 “ The Ecclesiasticks of particular countries did
 “ indeed at this time emancipate themselves
 “ from their subordination to the See of Rome,
 “ but—they all established Hierarchies of their
 “ own, according to their several Systems;
 “ and paid no more regard to the natural rights

(*n*) Chillingworth's Rel. of Protest. ch. vi. § 66.

“ of conscience, and the promotion of true religious Liberty, than the church of Rome itself, “ the people only changed their masters(o).”

The very Reformers began to look back with regret upon the honours, riches and powers of the Church they had left, and in too many instances to imitate her. The Spirit of the martyrs softened into the complacency of the Courtier, and Religion became in many as it was before, a mere stalking horse to Politicks; the true Faith gave way to Civil Utility, they stop'd short in the midst of this career, and even the Clergy themselves began to remember the flesh pots of Egypt, “ the fish their Fathers did eat there freely, the cucumbers, and melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick (p).” Or to speak more plainly, When by the blessing of God, the Protestants had got free from the power of the Romish Church, and very great things might have been expected from their receiving the Scriptures as the ONLY Rule of Faith, which was the noble Principle they sat out upon; they suddenly became infected, through all the Churches, with the same Lust of power which they had condemned at Rome. From hence originated the demand which was made by Calvin upon the people of Geneva, that if he became their teacher, they should be content to

(o) Evanfon's letter to the Bp. of Litchfield and Coventry, pa. 61, 62.

(p) Numb. xi. 5.

admit a complete form of discipline, which both they, and also their Pastors, should be solemnly sworn to observe *for ever* (q). For though they asserted the liberty of judging for themselves against the Church of Rome, they did not chuse to give up the Antichristian power (r) of judging for other men: and though but just delivered from the darkest ignorance themselves, they began to set themselves up as properly qualified to determine, and circumscribe, the Faith of future ages, and, in imitation of the Roman Church, to form articles and confessions of Faith, which they bound authoritatively upon the Consciences of other people; to deny the common liberties and rights of Subjects to those who would not subscribe them, and to look

(q) Hooker's Preface.

(r) Mr. Buan Herport, who was lately persecuted at Bern, where he was imprisoned and died, observes " that
 " the man of Perdition, Antichrist, is to be found in all
 " places. Whoever makes himself judge over his brother,
 " forcibly obtrudes on him his own imaginations, and thus
 " sets up himself in the temple of God; He usurps Christ's
 " prerogative, burthens conscience with terrible Oaths for
 " the sake of human Edicts, and persecutes the true disci-
 " ples, the living members of the Church. [Whoever does
 " these things] whether Pope or King, Sovereign or Ma-
 " gistrate, Clergy or Layman is ANTICHRIST. Many
 " Popes were men of parts, consideration, and piety; and
 " there have been many worthless country parsons great
 " Antichrists in a small sphere." And many who look
 abroad for Antichrist, or the man of sin, in the true sense
 of the Phrases might find him in their own breast.

upon

upon all deviations from them as heretical and worthy of punishment. “ To which spiritual
 “ Tyranny the Canon law being retained almost
 “ every where, not a little contributed. Luther
 “ indeed was for a total abolition of it, but the
 “ Lawyers defended it as of great use for the
 “ regular course and speedy administration of
 “ Justice(s).”

In England, the Palatinate, Switzerland, and Geneva, they murdered those whom they looked upon to be Hereticks(*t*); though in the United Provinces, the Landgravate of Hesse-cassel, and the Lutheran countries, they did not proceed to such extremities. And it is remarkable in all the trials of Heresy in England (and it seems to be the same in all other Protestant countries) that the Culprits are not examined and judged by the scripture only, upon the sole authority of which their Churches are founded; but the doctrines of the four first general Councils, and other human decisions are admitted in evidence against them: against all which kind of authority, the whole body of Protestants, in their con-

(*s*) Buan Herport's Essay on Truths of Importance, page 173. (*t*) Legat was burnt in Smithfield in 1611, and the next month Whiteman, as Hereticks. Gibson's codex, page 426. Jane Bocker and Van Pere, by Ridley and Cranmer, in the reign of Edward VI. Val. Gentilis, at Bern; and Servetus, at Geneva, by Calvin; and some condemned for Heresies of so opposite a nature, as was impossible to be held by the same person.

tentions with the Romanists: and Luther in particular, in his answer to the emperor Charles V. at the diet of Wormes, have always so vehemently protested: For being questioned by the Emperor whether he would maintain his writings, he answered, that he would not revoke any thing that he had written or taught, if he were not convinced by the words of Scripture or by evident Reasons. And some days after, when there was a Treaty in the presence of some of the Princes; and in particular of the Abp. of Triers, and the Elector of Brandenburg, and they were desirous to induce him to refer every thing to the judgment of the Emperor, and the assembly and diet without any conditions; he answered "The prophet forbad us to put any
 " confidence in men, yea even in princes, to
 " whose judgment nothing ought less to be
 " committed than the word of God." Last of all it was proposed, that he should submit all to the judgment of a future Council; to which he agreed upon this condition only, that "first
 " the articles which he intended to be laid before
 " them should be taken out of his books, and
 " that Sentence might be given of them but according to the Scriptures (u)." Upon this fundamental Principle all the Protestant Churches are built, and with it they must stand or fall; and it is entirely owing to the neglect of this

(u) Father Paul's Hist. translated by Bret, pa. 14.

principle, and leaving in the Protestant Churches some of the old leaven of Popery, that human and divine placets continue now to be so mixed together, and established among Protestants; that their Creeds and articles contradict the Scriptures, and render them liable to be condemned as Hereticks by their own laws. It is plain from hence, that Luther himself did not suppose the scripture to be such a nose of wax, that any thing the most absurd and mischievous might be proved from it, as the writers against the petition of the clergy to be freed from a Subscription to Articles, have maintained: but as a proper and consequently a determinate judge or Rule to refer to.

By this mixture of divine and human decisions the progress of christianity to its purity and perfection, has received such an unexpected check in the midst of the most sanguine and reasonable hopes, that it would be nothing wonderful, especially if some lately revived principles of Popery should be encouraged, if this mixture of Truth and Falshood should, by degrees, carry the protestants back again into as gross errors as they are reformed from. “ For since Divinity has
 “ been made a Science, and Systematical Opinions (founded upon mere human authority)
 “ have been received and embraced in such a
 “ manner, that it has not been safe to contradict
 “ them, the burthen of vindicating christianity
 “ has

“ has been much increased; its friends have
 “ been much embarrassed through fear of speak-
 “ ing against local truths, and its adversaries
 “ have so successfully attacked those weaknesses,
 “ that christianity itself has been deemed inde-
 “ fensible; when in reality, it has been only the
 “ follies of christians (x) ” [in having esta-
 blished Errors.] And if the Politicians of this
 world shall think proper to defend those weak-
 nesses and established errors by the civil power,
 and introduce more human decisions into the
 Church by making *more strict Inquiry into Heresy*;
 Christianity will become indefensible against its
 adversaries by all the members of the establish-
 ment, and the business must naturally fall intire-
 ly into the hands of those who dissent from it.
 For the Errors and absurdities of human decisi-
 ons in Church matters are infinite; and nothing
 but a close adherence to the Scripture can prevent
 them, and preserve the spirit of Truth distinct from
 the spirit of Error. And when a national Reli-
 gion becomes so overloaded with error, as not
 to be able to support itself by reason and argu-
 ment, the Politicians will naturally drive the
 nail that will go, and have recourse to persecu-
 tion. This has always been the practice of the
 Church of Rome, and some times of the Reform-
 ed Churches.

(x) Dr. Sykes.

The truth of what I am laying down, as to the method of Prosecutions among the Protestants upon accusations of heresy, will appear from hence, that in the judgment of the Archbishops, and Bishops, and Clergy, of the province of Canterbury, in convocation assembled concerning diverse assertions in the books of Mr. Whiston, they examined them, not by the holy scripture ONLY, but added the two first general councils, and the Liturgy and articles of the church of England, in order to give judgment upon them. And if it be said, that his case was particular, because he was a Clergyman, we must refer to the Law books; where we are told, that heresy is any thing that may hereafter be decided by act of Parliament with the consent of Convocation(y). So that the principles upon which the Protestant Reformers built, are entirely contradicted: The Scripture, which they declare to be the only Rule of Faith, is superseded by a quite different Test; the appeal is removed from divine to human authority; the Right of private judgment or Liberty of Conscience, the only justifiable plea for leaving the church of Rome, is as fully taken away by the Laws which enjoin the authority of Councils and human articles, as it is at Rome: and what is still more discouraging

(y) Blackstone, vol. IV. pa. 49, 50. Stat. 9, 10. Wm. III. c. 32.

to the cause of christianity, is, the terrifying aspect of the Laws against heresy as they now stand; and like a two-edged sword, cut on both sides. The marks of heresy are so very different and opposite, and the different Creeds and Articles so contradictory to one another, as I shall hereafter shew in several instances, that, upon some very important questions of Divinity, a man is equally liable to be condemned of heresy whether he maintains the affirmative or the negative. To say nothing of the impossibility of avoiding it in such articles as are not now heretical, but may be made so whenever the Parliament and convocation please.

But, in a very short time, the Protestants became sensible, that by framing articles of Religion they had only framed their own chains, and began to be very uneasy under them; they found them too tight: and to give them some relaxation in their struggle for liberty, K. Ja. I. put forth a declaration, giving them leave to subscribe in different and contradictory senses. Since which time it has never been guessed at with any probability, what use they can possibly be of: while the mischief of them is manifest, in bringing into the Church, another Rule of Faith different from the Scripture, and thereby taking away from the Protestant Churches the Essential and fundamental principle

ple of their Constitution. And here the Protestants may be compared to the Israelites when they desired a King in imitation of the neighbouring nations, while the *Lord their God was their King*. Thus the Protestants must have their Articles and Subscriptions, because the Roman Church had them: not considering that the Roman Church forbids the use of the Bible, and therefore it became necessary for them to supply its votaries with human inventions, or else they would have *no Rule* to go by. But why the Protestants should not be satisfied with the Laws of God, and why they should change the liberty of the Gospel for human laws, or join them together, (which never served to any purpose since the days of Constantine, but to give occasion to divisions, massacres and murders), can only arise from their own vices and follies. And they have been already punish'd with their own Inventions; by not being able to defend their own Creeds, and still continue to be so.

And yet notwithstanding the Peace and Quiet that we have of late enjoyed, merely by the Candour and Moderation of the times, in not examining into our different opinions: and notwithstanding the many dangers that hang over our heads and the heads of our posterity, if an age of Bigotry should follow this age of dissipation, and the Laws should be put in execution against us, let us believe how we please;
we

we are told by persons learned in the law,
 “ that every thing is as it should be, unless that
 “ perhaps Heresy ought to be more strictly de-
 “ fined; and no persecution permitted even in
 “ Ecclesiastical Courts TILL the tenets in ques-
 “ tion are by proper authority declared to be
 “ Heretical; and that under these restrictions
 “ it seems necessary for the support of a nati-
 “ onal Religion [whether Popery, Paganism
 “ or Mahometan, the argument is equally con-
 “ clusive] that the officers of the Church should
 “ have power to censure Hereticks, but not
 “ extirpate(z).”

Here we find the same opinion is maintain-
 ed by the Protestants, which must have pre-
 vented the propagation of the Christian Reli-
 gion at first among the Jews and Heathens;
 and all Reformation of the errors which were
 afterwards introduced into it. And can such a
 principle be consistent with a Religion, which
 made its progress in opposition to all the power
 of the Roman Emperors, and all the Ecclesiasti-
 cal Censures of the Roman Priests, whether Pa-
 gan or Papistical? “ It is certain, that in Eng-
 “ land, though the Pope had as great power
 “ as any where; yet there were no *executions*
 “ for matter of opinion known till the time of
 “ Henry IV. who, because he usurped the
 “ Crown, was willing by all means to endear
 “ the Clergy by destroying their enemies, that

(z) Sir Wm. Blackstone.

“ so

“ so he might be sure of them to all his purposes(a).” But how far our Politicians will carry their Church censures, when they find them not effectual to prevent the evils they are in fear-of, I have already observed; and it plainly appears in several instances, even in worthy and good men who have turned persecutors and murderers. But how contrary is all such power to the Religion of Protestants, even though it should not extend to extirpation!

Let us consider this matter nearer, and enquire whether Persecution, though short of extirpation, upon account of Heresy, be founded upon the Laws of Christ, or the spirit of anti-christ.

And first what occasion is there that the Christian Religion, when established in any nation, should have any more or any other Articles in it, than what are plainly expressed in the Scripture? I will venture to answer, none at all: and the twentieth Article of the Church will support me in the assertion: Because; it is undoubtedly true, that whatever is added to the Scripture is no part of it; and consequently no part of Christianity; and to determine upon such doctrines as are uncertain and problematical, is to usurp the authority of the Lawgiver;

(a) Taylor's Lib. of proph. Ded. 27.

and to condemn to death upon no better evidence is murder.

“ He that depends upon another person’s
 “ interpretation of a Law or doctrine, either
 “ willingly or ignorantly, makes the Law and the
 “ Lawgiver both stales, and obeys only the In-
 “ terpreter. As if I should pretend that I should
 “ submit to the laws of the King of England,
 “ but should indeed resolve to obey them in
 “ that sense, which the King of France should
 “ put upon them. Whatever they were, I pre-
 “ sume every understanding Man would say,
 “ that I did indeed obey the King of France, and
 “ not the King of England. If I should pre-
 “ tend to believe the Bible; but yet I should
 “ understand it according to the sense which the
 “ chief Mufti should put upon it; who would
 “ not say, that I were a Christian in pretence
 “ only, but indeed a Mahometan(*b*).”

Men therefore can have no authority to deter-
 mine for others upon doubtful questions; much
 less to make such determinations to be tests of
 Heresy; and for this plain reason, because they
 are ignorant themselves on which side the ques-
 tion the truth lies, and men of as much know-
 ledge and virtue as themselves understand it in
 a different manner. Such an authority there-
 fore, without Infallibility, would be a contra-

(*b*) Chillingworth’s Rel. of Prot. preface, § 10.

dition; because it would be an authority to establish falsehood as well as truth: And therefore the Romanists argue very consistently and justly, that wherever there is such an authority the judge must be infallible. And the Protestants argue as solidly, that as the Popes have contradicted one another in their decrees, and consequently are not infallible; they can be possessed of no such authority.—If there be no more Infallibility among the Protestants, than there is among the Popes; *by whom is Heresy to be more strictly defined?* or by what new data, or new inspiration, is the matter to be decided? and lastly, what benefit can the Politicians expect to accrue to the State, by rooting out the belief of such doctrines, as, for any thing they know to the contrary, may be very important Truths? what advantage from punishing as good and useful subjects as any they have among them, merely because they do not agree with their Rulers about some abstruse questions, which have been litigated perhaps for many hundred years between men of Learning and Virtue; merely because they sometimes may see farther than their Rulers and sometimes not so far?

Let us then enquire by what new Data or Inspiration is Heresy to be more strictly defined? If by divine authority (and that it must be, if it be by any proper and sufficient authority, for any other authority is more likely to define it
wrong

wrong than right) where shall we find any more light to direct us than the learned men who went before us ?

The Politicians indeed, and the Lawyers, may perhaps think, that the Laws of the land can make any thing Heresy, or that an *act of Parliament* can do it with the *assent of Convocation* (c); as they may make what they please to be Felony; and so one thing may be heresy in France, and the contrary in England. But the question is not what is called Heresy in Synods or Councils, either ecclesiastical or civil, where a man may be deemed a Heretick for not worshipping Saints or Images, but what is so called in Scripture, and is really displeasing to God, and immediately detrimental to the peace of society. For nothing is more unworthy of a Politician, than to suffer any thing to be punished as a crime, which is not so in itself, and serves only to insnare the innocent. Nor is it only impolitick, but dangerous, if we may trust the famous Wickliffe, who says, “no Prelate shall excommunicate any one unless he knows that God hath first excommunicated him: and he that so excommunicateth, is thereby a heretick excommunicate.” In short, where the Liberty, and property, and perhaps the life of a man is concern’d in a Ver-

(c) See back, page 36.

dict, a good and a wise man would never think himself too cautious in determining so difficult a question. The votes of a Parliament or Convocation, can no more make that Heresy which is not so in its own nature, than they can make falsehood to be truth, or by declaring a crooked line to be the shortest one that can be drawn between the extreme points, will make it straight. Was Vigilus a heretick, because he was condemned and burnt as such, for asserting the Antipodes? or Galilæo, who, if he had not recanted, would have suffered the same fate, for maintaining the Earth's motion? Is it a heresy, to say, that Earthquakes are produced by natural causes; or, that the number of years from the beginning of the world is uncertain? or, that there are many worlds, all which Philastrius has marked as such(*d*)? Were the Priscillianists, who were murdered by Maximus, hereticks, because they would not eat their herbs boiled with flesh(*e*)? or the Artotyres, because they offered bread and cheese in their mysteries? or the Tascodrugites, or Passolorynchites, because they put their fingers upon their noses or mouths during prayers(*f*)? or the Stercorarians, because they believed that the Eucharist broke their Fast, and was liable to digestion? Or was St. Paul a heretick, because he worshipped God

(*d*) Philos. Hær. 54, 63, 65.

(*e*) Baxter's Ch. Hist.

(*f*) Dupin's Eng. Vol. II, page 48.

after the manner that some call Heresy? Or, are those Christians Hereticks who agree with him in the belief that there is one God and Father of all, who is above all. Eph. iv. 5. Absolute power, and Zele, without knowledge, may declare it Heretical to kneel in the church, or to stand upright; to fast or to feast; and can punish for any thing, or for nothing, and carry on a similar scene of Superstition and iniquity against good and useful subjects, under the pretence of heresy, to that which was acted in new England, under the pretence of Witchcraft; where, after they had murdered a number of innocent people, and began to fall upon the chief men of the colony, they found at last, that they had been all wrong; and the poor Witches knew no more of the Devil than those who condemned them did of Justice, Christianity, and common sense, which were all overwhelmed in Bigotry, and Superstition.

The notion of commanding a man's Faith by a law is thus condemn'd by Ambrose, "Those," says he, "whom Auxentius could not deceive
 " by his discourse, he thought should be smote
 " with a sword; uttering with his mouth, and
 " writing with his hand bloody laws, as thinking that a law can command men's Faith;" and in a journey into Gallia he refused to communicate with those Bishops who would have some certain Hereticks put to death. The
 emperor

emperor Marcian in like manner, who called together the council of Chalcedon, and was a Prince highly commended for his piety, solemnly protested, that he had forced no man to subscribe or assent to the Council of Chalcedon against his will; for, says he, we will not draw any man into the way of life by violence or by threats; and Hosius says the same thing of Constantians, that he never compelled any man to be Orthodox. And this Mr. Daillé observes is the course that is approved by all the ancients(*f*).

No good man in the Catholic Church, says Austin, allowed the Punishment of Hereticks with death; and if the Lust of Revenge in any person do render evil for evil, we do not approve of them though their Punishment be *much less* than death; much more do we detest the robbing any of their private goods, or taking away what belongs to them, though they be done for the procuring of UNITY; all these things displease good men, they forbid, they hinder them as much as they can, judging them not laudable but damnable. Aug. con. Crescon Grammat. L. iii. Cap. 50.

And such was the opinion of the most learned Bishops and Fathers of the Church in former ages. As must appear by the quotations from them in this pamphlet, to which purpose see the preface to a discourse concerning the Laws

of the Church of Rome, made against Hereticks, written, as supposed, by Dr. Morris, Chaplain to Abp. Sancroft, and reprinted by the order and encouragement of Abp. Wake, and published by Dr. White Kennet, Bp. of Peterborough.

But if Heresy must indeed be more strictly defined, what man in the world is equal to the undertaking? The Protestants pretend not to Infallibility: must we then appeal to the Papists?

St. Austin, speaking in general, says, a Heretick is one who follows false or new opinions for secular advantages(g). But who shall judge whether the opinion be either new or false? This is the very question, which, with relation to some doctrines, the christian world has been disputing upon from the days of the Nicene Council. And who can tell, but God alone, whether he follows them for secular advantages? Mr. Chillingworth says, he that believes the Scripture, and endeavours to believe it in the true sense, cannot possibly be a Heretick; and Mr. Hales of Eton says, “ Heresy is
“ an act of the will, and not of reason; a lie,
“ and not a mistake.” And when Austin comes to be more particular, he says the same thing; for he allows that “ to make a heretick, there

(g) Hæreticus est qui alicujus temporalis commodi & maxime Gloriæ & principatus sui gratiâ, falsas vel novas Opiniones gignit vel sequitur. Aug. de Definit.

“ must

“ must be not only an error in judgment but a
 “ perverseness in will(*b*)”. And in another
 place he says, “ It cannot at all, or without
 “ great difficulty be defined regularly, what it
 “ is that makes a man a heretick(*i*).”

Bp. Taylor says, “ if a man’s error be not
 “ voluntary and part of an ill life, then, be-
 “ cause he leads a good life, he is a good man
 “ and therefore no heretick: no man can be a
 “ heretick against his will(*k*).”

On the other hand, if we consult the Reformatio Legum carried on under Henry VIII. and Edward VI. pursuant to an act of Parliament; we shall find Heresy to be of such a comprehensive nature, that no man can avoid it. The words of the Reformatio Legum are these, *Hæc est differentia inter blasphemiam & hæresin, quod blasphemia contemptu contumelias in Deum projicit & iracundia: sed Hæresis errore falsas opiniones suscipit & inscianter.*

Heresy is when false opinions are taken up unwittingly and by mistake. And who can tell

(*b*) Qui sententiam suam quamvis falsam atque perversam nulla pertinaci animositate defendunt, quærunt autem cautâ sollicitudine veritatem, corrigi parati cum invenerint nequaquam sint inter Hæreticos deputandi. August. contra Manichæ. 24, q. 3.

(*i*) Quid verò faciat Hæreticum regulari quadam Definitione comprehendere, aut omnino non potest at difficiliter potest. See Emlyn’s narrative, page 65.

(*k*) Liberty of Proph. § 2. Num. 12.

if

if Heresy should come to be more strictly defined, whether the definition of Mr. Chillingworth, Mr. Hales, and Bp. Taylor (not to mention what St. Paul says, that a Heretick is self condemned) would be overruled by the *Reformatio Legum*? Or suppose another Diana Valentina (*k*) should undertake to reform the Church: who can doubt in such a case, that the heretick hunters would have as good noses, and be as staunch, as the witch finders of New England; and ruin as many honest men? for all the rogues and hypocrites would be orthodox, and join the pack.

Hear what Dr. Sherlock says against the Papists, and it is just as true when objected to the Protestants. “ While nothing was Heresy but
 “ the denial of a plain acknowledged Article
 “ of the Christian faith, and there was no dis-
 “ pute who were Hereticks, the power of de-
 “ posing Hereticks was sacred and venerable,
 “ and had its just authority and effects; but

(*k*) Father Paul, in his history of the Council of Trent, tells us, that about the time that Servetus suffered, many were burnt in France for Religion; not without the indignation of honest men, who knew that the violence used against the poor people was not for piety and religion, but to satiate the covetousness of Diana Valentina, the King's mistress, to whom he had given all the confiscations of goods made in the Kingdom for the cause of Heresy.

H

“ since

“ since the controverfy is, *what is Heresy?* the
 “ world is divided about it. Though the pow-
 “ er remains, yet the Exercife of it becomes
 “ contemptible; when a church firft coins new
 “ articles, and then cenfures and depofes them
 “ for Hereticks who do not believe them.”

Is not this the very cafe of thofe proteftant Churches, which interpret the Scripture by their own fallible judgment, in framing Articles and Liturgies; and then, falling in love with their own sagacity, bind the fame upon pofterity, making thofe very Articles and Liturgies the tests of Heresy, and condemning thofe who will not acknowledge them to imprifonment, and confiscations, and death? Is not this, to fet their own fallible interpretations upon the fame footing with the infallible word of God? And fhall the Proteftants, who condemn this, be guilty of the fame Tyranny? Yet this has been the cafe.

What can be more amazing, than to fee the profeffors of a Religion, “ a pure and humble
 “ religion,” as Mr. Gibbon juftly describes it,
 “ which gently infinuated itfelf into the minds
 “ of men,” and was founded upon love, and built up in oppofition to the eftablifhed opinions of the Country in which it firft appeared, and to every other Religion in the world; and was afterwards reformed from the errors which had crept into it by the fame kind of oppofition; who could imagine, I fay, that its Profeffors
 fhould

should no sooner get free from the persecution of their enemies, than they should immediately arrogate to themselves the very same power over others, which they had just before groaned under; and should use the very same arguments to bite and devour one another, which they had condemned as tyrannical: nay, in the case of Mr. Emlyn, even when they were themselves only under a toleration, and were obliged to the lenity of Government for their own safety. And Bp. Taylor, to the same purpose, observes, “that there were Divines in Lower Germany
 “who with reason spake against the Inquisition,
 “and the restraining Prophecy [or liberty in
 “preaching] who yet when they had shaken off
 “the Spanish yoke, began to persecute their
 “brethren.” Page 208.

Who can think, without horror and amazement, of such excellent men as Cranmer and Ridley condemning an unhappy woman to death for being an Anabaptist, and defending it by the Sophistical argument of stoning Blasphemers under the law of Moses; (as if that had given them the power of burning an Anabaptist, who is no Blasphemer under the laws of Christ) while the young weeping King, whose unsophisticated mind was open to the common sense and feelings of Human nature, saw and lamented her unhappy fate.

H 2

Without

Without doubt these unhappy men were sensible of their errors when they were brought to the stake themselves, and could then see plainly enough, that every deviation from the opinion of a ruling party, was not heresy: and if it was, yet the laws of God give the Christians no more right to murder a heretick than a true Believer, whatever the Laws of the State may do.

What did the two great Persecutors, Cyril and Nestorius, gain by defining heresy more strictly when they both fell into the snare they had driven others into? And what can we desire more for the peace and safety of all good men, (next to the abolition of the severe laws already in being) than to prevent all inquiry into heresy, and suffer the Laws of the land against us to lie dormant as they now do? But strange as it is, there are many men of so violent a temper against such as differ from them in opinion upon religion, that they rather chuse the sword to hang over their own heads, and the heads of their Posterity, than that both of them should be delivered, by a repeal of such Penal Laws, from the same Danger.

If we were only to consider the difference of opinion between the orthodox Christians, as they are called, and the Scripturarians, who are now the only genuine Protestants; or the different doctrines of the Polytheists, Arians, Sabellians, and Socinians, which are, all of them, so easy to condemn, and so difficult to avoid,
that

that those who have written against one of them have been generally accused of falling into a contrary one which is looked upon as equally heretical; we should see the impossibility of settling these points authoritatively, without putting the whole nation into a ferment upon a subject absolutely unnecessary to be settled, and of no publick use. It is an easy thing to talk of defining these matters more strictly, but no such easy matter to perform. The christians have been murdering one another upon these subjects for these 1400 years, (which every man of them must hereafter account for at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, who never gave them any such authority) but they are not at all the nearer to an agreement.

These subjects were left unexamined at the Reformation; and the world, even at this time of day, is hardly cool enough to undertake such a business. Melancthon was very sensible of this, and foresaw that the disputes about the Trinity would break out one time or other; and he speaks of this as Justin Martyr does, without the least intimation of any evil designs on either side among such as should differ in sentiments, “ You know, says he, that I was always fearful
 “ that these things about the Trinity would break
 “ out one time or other. Good God! what
 “ Tragedies will this question raise among po-
 “ sterity

“ sterity, whether the Logos be a *Substance*, whether the Spirit be a *Substance*(*l*).”

But why will the Politicians suffer these tragedies? Why will they be so imposed on by their bigotted Priests, as to sacrifice useful and faithful subjects to their ambitious rage? The very question which Melancthon here speaks of, as causing such tragedies, is considered coolly and dispassionately by Justin Martyr, as I observed; and the side of the question he disapproves, which is now called Socinianism, is dismissed by him, without any other censure than merely his approbation of the contrary opinion(*m*).—And the same was the case with the Homoousian doctrine, which hath caused so many persecutions and murders since, as may be seen in a letter of Constantine the Great, which he sent to Alexander and Arius by Hosius; in which it evidently appears, that it was not then considered as a fundamental article ἡ περὶ τῆς κορυφαίας τῶν ἐν τῷ νομῷ παραγγελμάτων, but of little importance; ὑπερλίαν ἐλαχίστων, very minute matters; ματαιῶν καὶ μηδαμῶς ἀναγκαίων, vain, and by no means necessary; which was no obstacle, as he observes, to their having one and the same

(*l*) περὶ τῆς τριάδος scis me semper veritum esse, fore ut hæc aliquando erumperent. Bone Deus quale Tragœdias hæc quæstio excitabit ad Posteror εἰ ἐστὶν ὑποστάσις ὁ λόγος, εἰ ἐστὶν ὑποστάσις τὸ πνεῦμα. Epist. Melanch. l. 4. Epist. 140. Edit. Lon.

(*m*) Dial. cum Tryph. 358.

Faith,

Faith, and one opinion in religion(*n*); much less, I may surely add, a brotherly love and Charity.

These things, says Dr. Whitby, could not have been said by the Emperor, who was surrounded by pious men, whom he consulted, nor would have been inculcated upon the Alexandrians by Hosius, a man approved for purity of faith, in order to reduce them to peace and concord, nor have been recommended as they were, by Eusebius and Socrates, as extremely necessary, and admirable advice, and full of wisdom, if they had imagined the controversy was then moved concerning a capital article of Faith, and necessary to be believed for Salvation(*o*).

It is manifest therefore that the heats and animosities among Christians upon these subjects have not arisen from the nature of the questions themselves, but from the Artifice and misrepresentations, and bigotry, by which the passions of mankind have been kept up for these 1400 years, *ὑπερ ἑλαχίστων*, as Constantine expresses it, upon matters of very small importance to Salvation.— And yet so sanguine were the Eastern and Western churches upon the question, whether the holy Ghost proceeded from the Father, according to the Constantinopolitan creed, or from the Fa-

(*n*) Apud. Euseb. de Vita Constan. L. ii. c. 68, 71.

(*o*) Soc. Eccles. Hist. L. i. c. 7, 8.

ther and the Son, according to what is called the Nicene Creed, that the Western Church, in the first Canon of the second Council of Lions, declares *damnamus & reprobamus*, we damn and reprobate all such as presume to deny that the holy Spirit doth eternally procede from the Father and Son; and on the other hand the Eastern churches, on every holy thursday, excommunicate as Scismaticks and Hereticks all the Latins (so they call the western Church) that do not hold that he procedes from the Father only; (*p*) and thus, if there was any validity in their anathemas and excommunications, the whole world is damned together. And yet, if the Christians then believed as they seem to do in some of their present creeds, that the substance of the Father and Son be one and the same, the question whether he proceeded from one or from both, must be absolutely unintelligible, and they curst one another without any meaning.

However, as long as they make use of no other than spiritual weapons, they only hurt themselves; if they procede any farther, it is the business of the civil magistrate to put a stop to all such unwarrantable acts and breaches of the

(*p*) Father Simon's Crit. Hist. of the Religions of the East page 16, 17. Collect. of Unitar. Tracts vol. II page 8. Vide Lombard's Senten. Lib. 1. Distin. 11. B. Baron ad An. 809, 879, 883. Ben Mord. Let. VIII, page 38. Pearson on the Creed, page 325.

Peace,

Peace, which are often suffered to follow such unchristian animosities; and to be no longer duped, as they still are in many Countries, with that fallacious argument, so contrary to all history and experience, that a variety of opinions in a State is of a dangerous tendency.

It is but too true indeed, if the Politician looks into the history of the world, that he will observe, with wonder and amazement, the murders, devastations, and massacres that have arisen, as may appear at a distant view, from a difference of religious sentiments. But if he draws a little nearer, and is honest enough to own where the fault lies, he will confess his mistake, and acknowledge that wherever a variety of opinions hath been allowed in any nation under heaven, it hath always increased its glory, wealth, and happiness; and all the dangers and commotions laid to its charge, have universally arisen not from difference of sentiment, but a difference in political interests, and a vain endeavour in one party to suppress the other, and increase its own importance. It is the vain attempt of bringing this about by silencing their adversaries, called the Heterodox and Sectaries, and forcing them to profess what they do not believe, that has so often ruined and depopulated countries, which would otherwise be rich, powerful, and happy. It is this that ruined the seven churches in Asia, and made Africa a solitude. And it has been

chiefly owing to the folly of the Civil Magistrate, in making himself a party in such disputes, and not preventing their proceeding to violence: whereas if he had maintained his proper Province, and prevented men of all parties and persuasions from molesting one another, as his duty required, he would have blessed the Society he presided over, with all the advantages which naturally arise from a Religious Liberty, without its suffering any of these Evils.

“ I acknowledge, says Montesquieu, that
 “ history is full of religious wars; but we must
 “ take care to observe, that it was not the
 “ multiplicity of religions that produced those
 “ wars, it was the intolerating Spirit, which
 “ animated that Religion, which thought she
 “ had the power of governing. It was the
 “ spirit of Profelytism, which the Jews con-
 “ tracted from the Egyptians, and which from
 “ them hath passed like an Epidemic and po-
 “ pular disease to Mahometans and Christians.
 “ It is, in short, the spirit of Enthusiasm, the
 “ progress of which can only be considered as a
 “ total Eclipse of human Reason(*q*).

“ The ancient Romans fortified their Empire,
 “ by indulging all sorts of Religious worship;
 “ but their Posterity destroyed it, by rooting
 “ out the various sects whose doctrines were not

(*q*) Persian Letters, LXXXV.

“ predominant. These sects were composed
 “ of entire nations, some of which, as the Jews
 “ and Samaritans, had retained their ancient
 “ religion after they were conquered by the
 “ Romans; others were dispersed through the
 “ Country, as the followers of Montanus in
 “ Phrygia, the Manichees, the Sabbatarians;
 “ the Arians in the other provinces; besides
 “ which, the generality of the people in the
 “ country continued in Idolatry, and infa-
 “ tuated with a Religion as gross as their un-
 “ derstandings. These sects Justinian caused
 “ to be extirpated by the military, as well as
 “ the Civil power; and the persecuted people
 “ revolting in their own defence, he thought
 “ himself obliged to extirpate them from the
 “ Empire: in consequence of which he depo-
 “ pulated many provinces, and whilst he ima-
 “ gined himself increasing the number of the
 “ faithful, he was only diminishing the race of
 “ mankind(*r*).

“ Constantine the great owed great obliga-
 “ tions to the Clergy, it was they who had
 “ settled him on the throne. But the con-
 “ demning of Arius’s doctrines, and the insti-
 “ tuting Confessions of faith, and Rules of dis-
 “ cipline, did not satisfy the fathers: they
 “ brought the Emperor to pass an act, that

(*r*) Montesq. of the Grand. &c. of the Romans, p. 222;
 and Marmontel’s Bellisarius, ch. xv:

“ every one who would not in all things con-
 “ form to the declared meaning and intentions
 “ of the Church, should be severely punished.
 “ Now this was going beyond any Pagan
 “ Prince: Nay, they persuaded the Emperor,
 “ that all their transactions were to be looked
 “ upon as those of God himself; and the Em-
 “ peror accordingly strengthened the Council’s
 “ decree with this formidable Law, that who-
 “ ever concealed an Arian book, and did not
 “ publickly burn it; whoever embraced that
 “ doctrine; whoever protected an Arian; or
 “ offered to plead for him in a Court of Justice,
 “ should immediately suffer death by the hands
 “ of the common executioner. Thus those
 “ hare-brained Shepherds, incapable of re-
 “ claming strayed sheep by mildness, and in the
 “ power of the Spirit, threw away the crook
 “ and took in hand the Rod, laying (to the ir-
 “ reparable damage of truth and of poor sub-
 “ missive Souls) a restraint on Conscience,
 “ which nature itself abhors. But the conse-
 “ quence was answerable to such detestable
 “ means. For, soon after, the erroneous Sect
 “ of the Arians became more powerful than
 “ ever, they even wrought such a change in
 “ the Emperor himself, that he repealed all the
 “ acts of the Council, received the Arians into
 “ favour, banished Athanasius, and did inex-
 “ pressible mischief to the Church. The Arians
 “ followed

“ followed the example of the too precipitate
 “ Orthodox, hewing them down on all sides
 “ with the same sword with which the latter
 “ had so furiously attacked them. Now this
 “ divine judgment should naturally have open-
 “ ed the Eyes of the Clergy, had they not been
 “ utterly eaten up with an unsatiabie desire of
 “ lording it over mens Consciences, which
 “ Paul however sets forth in very black colours,
 “ as the most dangerous Heresy, the very
 “ badge of Antichrist, who places himself in
 “ Christ’s judgment seat, assuming dominion
 “ over his brethren in matters of faith(s).”

If these things be seriously considered, what
 good can be expected to accrue to a State by at-
 tempting so impracticable and ruinous a Scheme
 as that of defining Heresy more strictly, or con-
 cerning themselves in such metaphysical disputes,
 which, as I observed, the new Testament always
 avoids? What benefit would it have been to
 England, if, in the late differences between South
 and Sherlock, the Government had interfered,
 and sided with Dr. South, and the Oxford decree,
 that the doctrine of three infinite Spirits (for
 which Val. Gentilis was beheaded by the Pro-
 testant Senate of Bern) was impious and hereti-
 cal; or with Dr. Sherlock, that the contrary
 doctrine (for which Van Pere was burnt in
 Smithfield) viz. that there was only one infinite

(s) Buan. Herport; pa. 169, 170, 199.

Spirit, was Heresy and Nonsense, (as the different parties expressed themselves) and had proceeded upon it to hang, fine, and imprison, not only the Learned, but the tradesmen and mechanics upon this Test; Would any man in the nation have been made a better subject, or even a better Christian? and would not many good and useful Subjects have been brought, especially among the divided Clergy, into great distress?

The behaviour of Gallio a Roman Magistrate, the brother of Seneca, in these circumstances, would be well worthy the imitation of the Christians. When Gallio was Deputy of Achaia, the Jews made an insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the Law. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked Lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be a question of words, and names, and of your Law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters: and he drove them from the Judgment Seat. Acts xviii. 12, &c.

Now what have the Magistrates in this Country to do with the metaphysical Disputes of the Christians, where there is no matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, any more than the Roman Magistrate

gistrate had with the complaints which were brought against St. Paul by the Jews? What was it to Gallio how St. Paul worshipped God, as long as he did not molest his neighbours? and what is it to the Christian Magistrate how we worship him? It is a matter out of his province, and out of his power to make us worship him at all. If it was a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, the Magistrate would have reason to interfere; but as to matter of worship, every man must be left to do it as he thinks best pleasing to God: and without this, it will be no worship, though the outward Ceremonies be ever so punctually performed. For every man has an unalienable right to believe according to known evidence: indeed it is impossible that he should do otherwise: and consequently no man or magistrate on earth can have a right to hurt another for becoming a Jew, a Mahometan, a Christian, a Socinian, an Arian, or a Pagan; the Religion makes no difference in the Argument(*t*).

“ It is worth notice, says Buan Herport in his
 “ Essay, 193, that under Constantine the Great
 “ the Church was in some measure moulded
 “ into a political form; and thus looked on
 “ as other civil communities, whose real welfare

(*t*) Tertullian says, *Humani juris ac potestatis naturalis est unicuique quod putaverit colere: nec alii obesse aut prodest alterius Religio, sed nec Religionis est colere Religionem quæ sponte suscipi debeat, non vi cum et hostiæ ab animo libenti expostulentur.* Ad Scapulam.

“ consists

“ consists in outward tranquillity, which is not
 “ to be obtained but by wholesome Laws, with
 “ penalties annexed as compulsive.” But the
 Church stands upon a very different footing: it
 is contrary to its nature [as Tertullian observes]
 that the true end of it should be obtained by
 such compulsory means. Again, its true welfare
 does not consist in outward Tranquillity, Con-
 fessions, Canons, &c. [but in true genuine Chris-
 tianity, which is preferable to every thing else up-
 on this account, that, when once it is admitted,
 it will, of itself, produce all the blessings, that
 can be wished for, even by those who think of
 nothing farther than Civil Utility] Non stude-
 mus Paci in detrimentum veræ doctrinæ—ut
 facilitatis & mansuetudinis famam colligamus,
 &c. says Greg. Nazianzen.

It was the great fault of the Romanists, as
 Luther observes, in his answer to Vigerius the
 Pope’s Nuncio, to establish the Church with Go-
 vernments taken from human Reasons, as if it
 were a temporal State. This is that kind of *wis-
 dom* which is accounted *foolishness* with God. And
 on the contrary, not to regard those politick rea-
 sons, by which Rome doth govern, but to trust
 to God’s promises, and to refer to his Majesty
 the management of Church affairs, is that human
folly which is wisdom with God (*u*).

(*u*) Father Paul’s Coun. of Trent, by Bret, pa. 76.

And Bishop Hoadly infers, from what he had before said in his famous Sermon on the nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ, that “ the
 “ grossest mistakes in judgment about the na-
 “ ture of Christ’s Kingdom or Church, have
 “ arisen from hence, that men have argued from
 “ other visible Societies, and other visible King-
 “ doms *of this world*, to what ought to be visible
 “ and sensible in his Kingdom: constantly leav-
 “ ing out of their notion the most essential part
 “ of it, *that Christ is King in his own Kingdom*:
 “ forgetting this *King* himself, because he is not
 “ now seen by mortal eyes, and Substituting
 “ others in his place as *Lawgivers* and *Judges*, in
 “ the same points in which he must either *alone*,
 “ or not *at all*, be Lawgiver and Judge; not con-
 “ tented with such a kingdom as he hath esta-
 “ blished and desires to reign in, but urging
 “ and contending that *his* Kingdom must be
 “ like *other* Kingdoms. Whereas he hath posi-
 “ tively warned them against any such arguings,
 “ by assuring that this Kingdom is *his* King-
 “ dom, and that it is not *of this world*; and
 “ therefore, that no one of his Subjects is Law-
 “ giver and Judge over others of them in mat-
 “ ters relating to Salvation, but *He alone*; and
 “ that we must not frame our ideas from the
 “ Kingdoms of this world, of what ought to
 “ be in a visible and sensible manner in his
 K “ King-

“ Kingdom.” The difference between these Kingdoms shall be considered by and by.

Another hindrance to the propagation of the Christian Religion in this Kingdom, which is of much the same nature as the laws against heresy and falls in with them, is the Authority of penal laws against Apostacy, which are common to the Protestant and Popish Churches; in both which we are allowed to use our reason so far as to take in the force of the arguments used in our conversion; but afterwards, if the same Reason should cause us to apostatise, we are subjected to fines and imprisonment. “ If any
 “ Person educated in, or having made pro-
 “ fession of the Christian Religion, shall by
 “ writing, printing, or advised speaking deny
 “ the Christian religion to be true, or the holy
 “ Scripture to be of divine authority, shall for
 “ the first fact be rendered incapable of holding
 “ any office or place of Trust: and for the
 “ second incapable of bringing any action,
 “ being guardian, executor, legatee, or pur-
 “ chafer of lands, and suffer three years impri-
 “ sonment without Bail(x).” And Bp. Hare observes, that though a man [perhaps] cannot be convicted of Heresy [i. e. opposing the doctrine of the Catholick Church] “ He may be
 “ convicted of writing or speaking against the

(x) Blackstone, Vol. IV. 49, 50. Stat. 9, 10. Wm. 3. c. 32.

“ established Doctrine of the Church, and that
 “ will draw on him the same Consequences that
 “ Heresy would do—the doctrine of the esta-
 “ blished Church will readily be supposed to be
 “ the doctrine of the Catholick Church, and
 “ therefore to oppose the doctrine of the one,
 “ is in effect to oppose both. So that a man
 “ shall be deem’d a heretic to all intents and
 “ purposes, and sentenced to the same Punish-
 “ ment; though in the sentence itself, for his
 “ COMFORT, the word heresy may be left
 “ out (y)”

Who can read without amazement the Reso-
 lution of the Whigparliament in 1689, to charge
 the Earls of Salisbury and Peterborough, Sir Ed-
 ward Hales and Mr. Walker with high-treason
 for their conversion to Popery (z)? The first
 Protestant Reformers would have taken it rather
 for a Resolution of the Inquisition, and started
 back at seeing the mark of the Beast so strongly
 impressed upon it; as the daughter of Inachus is
 described to have done, when she first viewed
 her new form in the water, and heard herself
 low.

————— sese externata refugit,
 Pertimuitque sonos, propriâque exterrita voce est (a).

The first thing that immediately strikes one,
 upon hearing this law is the danger a man runs

(y) Difficult. and discouragements, page 23. (z) Dal-
 rymple's Mem. pt. 2. page 102. (a) Ovid's Met.

into by becoming a Profelyte to Christianity; and the reflection how much safer he should live in a Christian country (where the laws are so severe against Apostacy) if he should never take the christian Religion upon him, and so avoid the danger both of Heresy and Apostacy; dangers, which may equally attend him after Baptism, whether he alter his opinion or not. For though he may have received Christianity at first as a religion agreeable to reason, and worthy of all acceptation, as laid down in the Scriptures; yet if his teachers shall afterwards convince him, that there are other doctrines belonging to the same Revelation which appear to him to contradict the divine attributes, or such as are absolutely absurd; why should he oblige himself to continue the profession of it any longer contrary to his judgment and conscience?

Or, why should he engage, under the forfeiture of his liberty and property, that he will change his opinions whenever the Governors of the Church shall alter their's, and the Parliament and Convocation shall think fit to call that Heresy, which before they told him was Orthodoxy, and he believed it and entered into the Church upon that belief? In neither of these cases can a man profess himself a Christian without risking his natural rights as a man. And how can it be defended as a common act of Justice in our Christian Governors, to admit their
Pro-

Profelytes upon the belief of one plane Creed, and then to punish them for objecting to another obscure one, which they had never agreed to.

One would think there could not be a greater discouragement to affright men from the Christian font, than these are: For who can answer for his future Sentiments? If so great a man as Mr. Chillingworth could embrace Popery, and after that return again to Protestantism, upon such substantial reasons, what man would chuse to lay himself under the severest penalties upon such uncertainty, and deprive himself for ever after of his right of judging for himself, as reason and evidence should prescribe?

The reflection of the Fox in Horace is a sufficient argument against openly professing christianity upon such terms——

Olim quod Vulpes ægroto cauta leonī——

Respondit referam, quia me Vestigia terrent

Omnia te adversum spectantia, nulla retrorsum.

One cannot help reflecting with how little reason, and how much to its own disgrace, Protestantism here takes example from Popery; as if there was no difference between truth and falsehood. In Popery there are a thousand contradictions to the common sense and reason of mankind, which may require force and violence to keep men steady in the *profession*, or at least in the *belief* of that Religion; whereas genuine Protestantism may be trusted to itself, to rational

nal argument, to the common sense of mankind; and it is not easy to imagine, that any consistent Protestant can have the least suspicion that it stands in need, either of rewards, or of threats to support it.

It is in vain to ransack Reason or Revelation in defence of these intolerant Principles, so detrimental to human society, so destructive to christianity and the rights of mankind. And it is a particular happiness to this nation, that the greatest lawyers condemn them, and scruple not to declare in open Court, that “ nothing is more
 “ unreasonable, more inconsistent with the rights
 “ of human nature, more contrary to the pre-
 “ cepts and spirit of the Christian Religion, more
 “ iniquitous and unjust, more impolitick than
 “ Persecution: it is against natural Religion,
 “ reveled Religion, and Polity(*b*).”

But let us hear what is advanced in defence of these laws. “ The belief of a future state of re-
 “ wards and punishments, the entertaining just
 “ Ideas of the moral attributes of the Supreme
 “ Being, and a firm persuasion that he superin-
 “ tends, and will finally compensate every action
 “ in human life (all which are clearly reveled
 “ and forcibly inculcated by the precepts of our
 “ Saviour Christ) these are the grand foundation
 “ of all judicial oaths, which call God to witness
 “ the truth of those facts, which perhaps may

(*b*) Lord Mansfield.

“ only

“ only be known to him and the party attesting;
 “ all moral evidence therefore, all confidence in
 “ human veracity, must be weakened by Irreli-
 “ gion and Infidelity(c).”

Reply. It is beyond all dispute, that the Obligation of an Oath is weakened by Irreligion; and if by Infidelity, the Learned Writer meant Atheism, it is overthrown by Infidelity. But the business of this paragraph was, to defend the penal Laws that are made against Apostacy from the Christian religion, whether it should be to *no religion at all*, or to *any other religion*. And his argument, if conclusive, should have proved not only that an Apostacy to Irreligion or Atheism weakened and overthrew the obligation of an oath: but, that an Apostacy to any *different religion* did the *same*; which he was not able to do. For though Christianity contains the grand foundation of all religious Oaths, it is not the only Religion that does so. The Obligation of an Oath is common to all Religions, and is founded in all Religions upon the same principle of *Faith in God*. It is to be found in the Pentateuch, the Koran, and the Heathen Writers; that is to say, among Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans. But let us go on to examine the consequence which is drawn from this observation (viz. that christianity contains the grand foun-

(c) Judge Blackstone.

dation

dation of religious Oaths) “ Therefore all affronts to Christianity, or endeavours to depreciate its efficacy, are highly deserving of human Punishment.”

Reply. What has all this to do with the Apostacy of a Religious man from one Religion to another? from Protestantism to Popery, or from Popery to Protestantism? Has not a man a right to serve God as a Christian in a Mahometan country, for fear it should be looked upon as an *affront* upon Mahometism and an *endeavour to depreciate* its efficacy with regard to the obligation of an Oath? or has he the less right to do so, because he was once a Mahometan? The argument is as good in one country as another, and alike in all Religions which hold the belief of a God, and the obligation of an Oath. And if the argument be valid and founded upon Truth, who could deserve human Punishment more abundantly than the Apostles did, who travelled into many different countries, in order to instruct and reform mankind, and persuade them to turn from Idols to the living God, or in the words of this Learned Writer, *to depreciate the efficacy of a Religion which held the obligation of an Oath*. In short, this argument is either of no validity, or else it is an Apology, and a sufficient one, both for the Jews and Pagans in all their Persecutions of the Christians, and even the crucifixion of Christ himself.

We

We are moreover told, in defence of these penal laws, that “about the close of the last century, the Civil Liberties which were then restored, being used as a cloke of Maliciousness, and the most horrid doctrines, subversive of all religion, being publickly avowed, it was found necessary for the Civil power to interpose, by not admitting those miscreants to the privilege of Society, who maintained such principles as destroyed all moral obligations—To this end was enacted the penal Statute of 9, 10. of Wm. III. ch. 32,” already quoted.

Reply. How can this Statute, which, it is said, was made upon account of miscreants who maintained principles that destroyed all moral obligation, extend, with any kind of Justice, to those who Apostatise from Christianity, either to Judaism, Mahometism, Paganism, or Deism, every one of which insist upon moral obligation?

Murder and Adultery may indeed be propagated, as Athanasius observes, by force and violence, agreeably to the author of them “who comes with axes and hammers to break open doors,” and requires nothing more than an external and hypocritical conformity: but true genuine Christianity, in which nothing is religious but what is voluntary, can only be propagated by conviction; and there is no con-

L
viction

viction in being told authoritatively, that such is the sense of Scripture; and if we will not believe it, we shall suffer in our liberty or property: for every man of common sense, and who ever thought upon the nature of belief, must know, that the cast of the die is as capable of convincing an honest man, as the formidable argument of fire and faggot.

It is allowed indeed by the great Lawyer, whose words I am considering, that it would be too severe to extirpate hereticks, and declared “ that the officers of the Church should
“ only have power to censure them:” or as the *Pretender*, in a letter to Mr. Charles Lesley, his Archbishop of Canterbury, expresses the matter more gently and with greater tenderness to our liberty and property, without the least hint of danger to our lives, “ The Church may
“ inflict Ecclesiastical Censures not extending
“ to any Civil Punishment.”

Be it so: we know how that matter is managed in the Roman Church. The Church only censures, and delivers them over to the secular power; but the secular power is obliged to condemn and execute. But as to our Governors in this Country, if the Laws give a right to punish, it is mere trifling, as bad as among the Romanists to tell us, that we should not extirpate. If they have any right at all to punish, or to lay on penalties upon account of difference

difference of Opinion, which they may call heresy, they have a right to do it as effectually as the Romanists, i. e. in such a manner as to put an end to the evil by forcing a compliance with their desires, whether it be necessary to that purpose to make use of fines, imprisonment, or Death. For all these Censures are supposed to be founded on the care of mens Souls; in comparison with which, if a heretick continues firm in his principles, or, as the Ruling party would call it, obstinate in his errors; and the passions of the Censurers are thereby sufficiently heated, the expence of blood will be looked upon as of small account, when set in competition with the good of Souls, the cause of God, and the Peace of the Church: and so must end in Extirpation at last, whatever Antipathy the Censurers might have to such Severity at the beginning of the Prosecution.

Even Bucer, though otherwise a man of gentle disposition, did not scruple to declare in the pulpit, that Michael Servetus deserved to have his entrails pulled out, and be torn in pieces: and Farrel, in a letter to Calvin, uses an argument, which few, if any of the half-persecutors would be able to withstand. “ It will be a
 “ mighty thing if he (Servetus) dies a true pe-
 “ nitent, undergoing but one death, though he
 “ deserves to die a thousand times: and if he
 “ endeavour to edify the Spectators, having

“ made it his business to pervert many people
 “ that are dead, and others that are still living,
 “ and even those that shall be born hereafter.
 “ The judges must be very *cruel*, and perfect
 “ *Enemies* to Christ, if they are not affected with
 “ the horrid blasphemies with which that per-
 “ nicious heretick attacks the divine Majesty,
 “ and endeavours to overthrow the Gospel, and
 “ to corrupt all churches. But I hope those
 “ that are commended for inflicting a just pu-
 “ nishment upon thieves and sacrilegious per-
 “ sons, will do their duty in this case, by *taking*
 “ *off* a man who has so long and so obstinately
 “ persisted in his heresy, and undone so many
 “ people—I beseech you behave in such a man-
 “ ner, that no one may be so bold in the time to
 “ come, as to publish new doctrines, and occa-
 “ sion so much disturbance as this man hath
 “ done.”

These are the diabolical aggravations by
 which the half-faced persecutors are pushed on,
 from smaller penalties, such as are even now
 imposed in this Country upon those who differ
 from us in Religion, to fines, imprisonment and
 blood. If we allow the Church or State a right
 to judge in Church questions, or matters of
 Faith, we shall soon find we have given up our
 Liberties and lives; which will from that time
 depend upon the will of others, and ~~the~~ temper
 of the times.

Luben-

“ Lubenjecius tells us, that this Farrel, not
 “ only determined that Servetus should be cut
 “ off, but the extirpation of all hereticks;
 “ which gave Grotius occasion to say, that the
 “ spirit of Antichrist reigned not only at the
 “ Tiber, but also at the lake of Geneva.”

Both Calvin, and dreaming Beza, as Sir Isaac Newton calls him, wrote in defence of punishing hereticks by the Civil Magistrate. Each of these Reformers, says Lubenjecius, taking a dart out of the quiver of the Church of *Rome* and her *adherents*, to thrust it with greater fury into the sides of Hereticks of their *own making*.

Some indeed will tell us, “ that the Dutch
 “ Divines at Dort, and the Protestants in gene-
 “ ral, allow of Church authority in the decisions
 “ of Church questions or matters of Faith.”
 But what does it signify who allows or claims
 it, if nobody has a right to it? Mr. Hales, in
 his letter to Abp. Laud, says very truly, that,
 “ in Church causes and matters of Fact, Eccle-
 “ siastical Persons, in cases of their cognisance,
 “ have the same authority as any others have,
 “ to whom power of Jurisdiction is committed;
 “ their consistories, their courts, their determi-
 “ nations, stand upon as warrantable evidence
 “ as the decisions of other Benches and Courts
 “ do. But in point of Church questions, if I
 “ say the authority of the Church is *none*; I
 “ know of no Adversary that I have, the Church
 “ of

“ of Rome only excepted : For this cannot be
 “ true except we make the Church a judge of
 “ controversies ; the contrary to which we ge-
 “ nerally maintain against the Church of
 “ Rome(*d*).”

The favourers of Church authority in matters of Faith, have no way to answer this, but either by actually disclaiming their Protestant principles, and denying the word of God to be the only judge of Controversy ; or giving up the question. And it is by no means sufficient to reply, as it has been answered to the Author of the confessional, the learned Mr. Archdeacon Blackborne, “ We know not what farther limi-
 “ tations, perhaps very sufficient ones, Mr.
 “ Hales might be reduced to, in his private con-
 “ ference with the Abp. (*e*) (Laud).”

Let these writers, the favourers of Church authority in matters of Faith, speak out, and say, what arguments they *themselves* can produce, or what they imagine the Archbishop *did* or *could* produce, or what limitations can be *supposed to be produced*, to which Mr. Hales was reduced ; and not tell us, *perhaps* he might be reduced we know not *how*, to we know not *what*.

But in truth we are here left in the dark ; because whatever arguments the Archbishop might *perhaps* have produced, were not able to bear

(*d*) Hale's Tracts page 224. (*e*) Third Letter to the
 Author of Confessional, page 125.

the light as may be proved à Priori: For an authority to interpret scripture one way at Rome, and another way at Dort, and another way at London; that can damn us in one Country for believing the real Presence, and in another for denying it; that decrees for the worship of images in one country, and in another against it; that is an Arian in one Country, Sabellian in another, and Socinian in a third: Calvinistical in one Church, Lutheran in another, and Arminian in a third; and yet orthodox in all; could never come from the God of the Universe, but from the distracted minds of weak and fallible men; For God is not the author of Confusion, but of Peace, as in all the Churches of the Saints, II. Cor. xiv. 33.

“ This locality of Truth, says Bp. Hall, of
 “ Norwich, is the most idle and childish plea
 “ that ever was imposed upon men; away with
 “ this Foppery (f);” and the Christians who defend such an inconsistent authority deserve no other reply, than in the words of Phormio, quid vos malum ergo nos ludificamini? Nolo, volo; volo, nolo, rursus; Cape, cedo; quod dictum indictum est, quod modo erat ratum irritum. The apparent absurdity of this notion, shews the mistake of the Churches in general, in hurrying up creeds and articles of Faith mere-

(f) Shaking of the Olive Tree, page 403.

ly by a majority of votes, upon questions, before they understand the Subject, and frequently upon such, as always were, and perhaps always will be problematical: Whereby they not only break that Unity, which they might otherwise preserve among the different Churches; but create differences and causes of animosity, even among Protestants of the same country. Episcopius hints at this mistake, when, speaking of the Nicene Creed, he says, *præcipitata potius quam a compositis animis profecta*(g).

The Papists act more wisely. It was a publick advice, which John Baptista Cigala, Bp. of Albenga, gave at the Council of Trent, in forming their anathemas, so as to condemn the Lutherans, and keep peace among themselves, to tolerate all the opinions in which they differed from one another, and to take care that no one do condemn another, but all might live in peace—To bring this about, the Cardinal of Santa Cruze observed what was disliked in any Congregation, and took it away; and there was scarce a day in which he did not alter something. He saw it impossible to bring so many Divines to a Uniformity of *sentiment*, and therefore only attempted a Uniformity in *words*. And thus in general, they live together in peace and Unity, under a nominal Uniformity, as if it had been a real one in opinion: while the Protestants, by

(g) Ben Mordecai, Lett. I. Note xv.

attempting that Uniformity of opinion, which they wished for, and looked upon as practicable, lost their labour in pursuit of a phantom, and broke into different Sects and Parties: and in those particulars in which any thing more is required than a nominal Conformity, the Popish Sectaries are as much at war with one another, as the Protestants.

“ There is no *middle* way between suffering every
 “ thing to be freely discussed, and so acknow-
 “ ledging the possibility of a mistake on any re-
 “ ceiv’d opinion; or the avowing this absurdity;
 “ that though bodies of men are liable to mis-
 “ take, yet their determinations are absolutely
 “ to be submitted to, and acquiesced in without
 “ farther inquiry. The little Genius’s, who
 “ would preserve the method of half persecution,
 “ either have not considered this matter, or else
 “ (in opposition to the conviction of their own
 “ minds, in opposition to that sacred Liberty,
 “ which has advanced Truth in the world, so far
 “ as it already obtains) they would propose
 “ means for its defence, which would at first
 “ have prevented the Knowledge of the Truth,
 “ and have totally destroyed it afterwards from
 “ the Earth(*b*).”

The English indeed appear to persecute with great moderation towards the Papists, when they only double tax them: but there is no trusting

(*b*) London Journal, May 10, 1729

to a moderation that is not founded upon principle. If the Papists be in Truth dangerous to the State, and enemies of Society, such a compromise is mere trifling with the public peace and Happiness; But if they are peaceable, useful, and affectionate Subjects, we have surely gone too far, and admitted of a Doctrine, which will carry us into all the injustice, and Severity of the Romanists.

But some perhaps will defend these Severities, and argue, that Individuals, by entering into the Church, do give up some of their natural Rights for the sake of enjoying the advantages of a religious Society, and among these, the power of *judging* and *acting* for *themselves*; just in the manner as men are supposed to give up some natural rights, for the sake of political advantages, when they enter into an alliance with one another to form a state.

But this is a mistake, even with relation to Civil Society; as hath been shewn in an excellent pamphlet, entitled, An Inquiry into the principles of Toleration, pa. 8. “ A Man does
 “ not in a State of Society, and under Civil
 “ Government, part with any of his Original
 “ Rights; he only Submits [or rather agrees to]
 “ certain conditions and regulations, by which
 “ those Rights are, in a more effectual manner,
 “ secured.” He gives no man, or set of men,
 a power against himself: nor indeed do they stay
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for any such leave; but exercise the right of self defence against all men in general. When a man agrees with others, I'll defend you against injury, if you will defend me; there are no rights parted with on either side; but mutual rights defended. No man has a right to injure another; and consequently, a general agreement between many, that none of them should be injured, can take away no right from any one of the Society: a man can never give up the right of injuring another, because he never had that right; and we must not confound Right with power.

But farther: the case, in matter of Faith, is somewhat different from that of *civil rights*. There are some things, and particularly the right of judging for ourselves in all matters of Faith, and the right of acting accordingly, which are unalienable; no man can, without Sin, give up his belief in God, or in Christianity; he is preengaged by prior and stronger obligations.

Those therefore who urge this argument, as if the entering into the Church was like underwriting any other bargain or Covenant, where you see what you are bound to, and may refuse if you do not like it, would do well to state the parallel properly, and the cases in which it will hold; and where it will not hold, there not to press it. “ The bargain or Covenant made with
“ the Church by entering into it, cannot pos-

“ sibly be absolute, and without condition, and
 “ limitation; for neither can she make such
 “ compact with me, nor I with her: we are both
 “ under previous contracts, and Obligations.
 “ Our agreements, can be no other than mutual
 “ engagements, which members of a body cor-
 “ porate are under, to obey the bye-laws of the
 “ Society; which, we know, do always imply
 “ this condition, that they be not contrary to
 “ the Laws of the land; for if they contravene
 “ that; both the makers of such bye-laws, and
 “ those who yield obedience to them, will find
 “ themselves obnoxious to punishment; and any
 “ single person who shall have confined his obe-
 “ dience to such bye-laws within the measure of
 “ the law of the land, will be found innocent
 “ and clear in the higher Courts; however he
 “ may be called promise-breaker, or bargain-
 “ breaker, or Oath-breaker, by these lower and
 “ inferior legislators; who have had the igno-
 “ rance or impudence to invade the province of
 “ the supreme Lawgiver, in bargaining away *his*
 “ right, and pretending to hold men to such co-
 “ venants as are repugnant to *his* commands,
 “ and restipulate, on their own parts, such
 “ things as are opposite to *his* authority.”

No Christian therefore can possibly have a
 right to enter *absolutely* into any agreement
 with any Church, or State, by giving up the
 unalienable right of private judgment in mat-
 ters

ters of Faith, and consequently, no Church or State can have a right to demand it of him.

“ I hear what some Whisperers say,” says Bp. Hall. “ It is the determination of the Church
 “ which makes what points she thinks fit de-
 “ fide, and fundamental. Let me confidently
 “ say, this is the most dangerous innovation
 “ that can fall into the ears, hearts, and hands
 “ of Christians. If the Church can make ano-
 “ ther God, another Christ, another heaven,
 “ other prophets and Apostles, she may also
 “ lay another Foundation. But that you may
 “ perfectly discover the fraud; what Church is
 “ it, I beseech you, by whom this power is
 “ arrogated, and by whom is it usurped? None
 “ but the Roman, and that is but a particular
 “ Church. I speak boldly, there never was so
 “ palpable a gullery(*i*).”

If this be the case, the Church and State, even though supposed, by Bp. Warburton, to be in alliance, can extend their power no farther than when they were separate, either at Rome, or Dort, or England: for no power on Earth can have a right to require of any man what he has no right to part with; and therefore all Church-authority must be confined, as Mr. Hales observes, to outward forms of Church government, worldly concerns, and such determinations as the Society has a right to

(*i*) Shaking of the olive tree.

entrust

entrust them with ; all which are human. And if they should attempt any legislative Power with regard to Church questions or matters of Faith, they should encroach upon the Authority of Christ, who is the only Legislator in his own Church ; and those who would make such Laws would be the Scismaticks, and not those who should be obliged in conscience to separate from them, rather than obey them(*k*).

But in truth, the very notion of an Alliance between Church and State at this time of day, and in this Country, in order to procure a power of right in matters of Faith, is not only imaginary, but wholly absurd ; and when it had a supposed Existence, it was founded in bloud. For though the profane Rant of the Persecutor Nestorius, to the emperor Theodosius, might be then looked upon as a preliminary article of Alliance between Church and State (clear me the earth of Hereticks, and I will in return give you the Kingdom of Heaven ; assist me to destroy the Hereticks, and I will assist you to destroy the Persians) because two Supreme Authorities were then believed, one of which had power in the next world, and the other in this ; by which means they were enabled on both sides to furnish their quotas ; and the one might murder the hereticks, and the other

(*k*) Hale's Tracts, 179, 184. Chillingworth's Relig. of Protestants, p. 1. ch. 3, § 64.

absolve them from the guilt; yet where the Church is known to have no such power in the next world, the Alliance is a mere fancy. The Romanists indeed pretend to retain the power still, and declare their absolutions and excommunications to be authoritative; and some there are among the Protestants, who still talk of the power of the Keys, and hanker after the same Authority. But the following Letter from J. R. in which this pretended Authority is asserted, will expose the absurdity of any such supposed alliance, and the mischief that must follow, if it was real.

Urbino, Nov. 29, 1717.

I thank you for the particular account you give me in your's of the 29th October, of the affair of Doctor Hoadly before the Convocation: to which there was a stop put, by a prorogation, to prevent an Inquiry into his Doctrine, and in all appearance a just Censure thereof in their own Ecclesiastical way. This, with many other proceedings of the Elector of Hanover, seems to be designed by Providence, to shew the Church and People of England, how little secure their Laws and Privileges are, under the present Government. For by the best Information I can have, the intrinsic spiritual power of the Church or Power of the Keys, as it was exercised by the Apostles, and the most
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pure and primitive Church in the three first Centuries after Christ, hath ever been thought an essential Right of the Church of England. So that it may INQUIRE into Doctrines of its own members, and inflict ecclesiastical censures *not extending to any Civil Punishment*. Now the Civil Government putting a stop to such proceedings, is in effect taking away that undoubted Right of the Church, which if it please God to restore me to my own just Right, I am sincerely resolved to maintain to it. The many repeated assurances that I have given of maintaining inviolably the Church of England, and all her just Rights and Privileges, secured to her by *so many Laws*, of confirming those Rights in our first Parliament, and of giving what farther reasonable Security on that head shall seem good to my People, is, I think, more than enough to quiet and satisfy the most scrupulous and apprehensive, as to the security that Church will enjoy under my lawful government. And if the People would but compare what they now feel and see, to what they may then expect, the conclusion cannot but be very much to my advantage; for the opening the eyes of those now deluded, and convincing them, that doing Justice to me, is the only solid Foundation for a lasting peace and happiness in the Church and State.

Hav-

Having so far an opportunity, I could not but signify thus much to you, and you may communicate it to whom you think fit. I don't doubt but the Convocation will now soon meet again; for it would be too gross to put it off a second time: and then to be sure it will take this case of Dr. Hoadly again under its Consideration, and I shall be glad to hear from you what is done in it.

I am the more glad of your health, that you know how concerned I was at its not allowing you to stay longer in this Climate, which agrees better with my health than my Inclination. But I hope in God's mercy better times may come; and I wish we may soon meet, where we both so much desire to be, and where I shall be able to shew you the singular regard I have for you

J. R.

Under the letter, from which the above Copy was taken by the writer of this pamphlet, was written,

Pretender's
The ~~King's~~ letter to Mr. Charles Lesley his Arch Bp. of Canterbury.

The word *King's* was scratched out as above, and the word *Pretender's* written above it, in the hand of Dr. Benjamin Hoadly, late Bishop of Winchester, and after the words *Charles Lesley*, the words *his Arch Bp. of Canterbury*, are also written in the Bishop's own hand; the rest is all in another hand. The letter I copied at Chancellor Hoadly's house at Southampton.

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We

We see by this letter (which no doubt was so worded as to be perfectly calculated for the principles of those of a certain class who were designed to read it, that the Church of England has no power to inflict Civil punishment; it can only INQUIRE into the doctrines of its own Members, and inflict ecclesiastical censures. On the other hand, the State has not the power of the Keys; and has therefore no right to examine into the doctrines of its members, relative to religious matters. This being the case, we find, that in all Popish Countries the Church and State have entered into an Alliance, by which means the one condemns, and the other punishes: and this I suppose was to have been the method (the Laws of the land with regard to Heresy all running that way) had J. R. and Mr. Charles Lesley met where they both so much desired to be.

Here moreover we may observe, that the Church of England has an undoubted right, an intrinsic *spiritual* power, the power of the Keys, as it was exercised by the Apostles, which the State at that time refused to acknowledge, and which J. R. promises to maintain to it against its lawful Prince, with whom it was then in alliance (if there be any meaning in that whimsical notion.) And I am afraid there were many Churchmen at that time so apprehensive of the Church's danger, that they were ready, if it could have been done with safety, to have left
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the alliance with King George the 1st. and entered into an alliance with J. R. and they might have defended their Treason upon the new-fangled principles of Bp. Warburton.

For, “ The alliance between Church and
 “ State subsists,” says the Bishop, “ so long as
 “ the Church thereby established, maintains its
 “ superiority of Extent. Which when it loses
 “ to any considerable *degree*, the alliance be-
 “ comes void ; for the united Church, being no
 “ longer able to perform its part of the Con-
 “ vention, which is formed on reciprocal con-
 “ ditions (viz. that it shall apply its utmost in-
 “ fluence in the service of the State, and the
 “ State shall support the Church,) the State be-
 “ comes disengaged.”

Thus formerly, says the Bishop, the Alliance between the Pagan Church, and the Empire of Rome was dissolved ; and the Christian established in its place ; and the late Alliance between the Popish Church and the Kingdom of England, was broken, and another made with the Protestant in its stead(*l*).

By this way of reasoning it follows, that if the Church and State shall differ, and the State becomes (let the cause be what it will) to any considerable degree unable to defend the Church, in what she calls her rights and privileges, the Alliance becomes void on that side. For the

(*l*) Alliance, 176, 179, 246, 254.

State, not being any longer able to perform her part of the Convention, which is formed upon reciprocal conditions, the Church becomes disengaged, and may enter into alliance with any other power that is able to support it. either J. R. or any one else: [or, in other words, she has a right to Rebel.]

It is amazing how far this ingenious scheme of Church power goes beyond the old ones ; for, before this system of Alliance was invented, all christian establishments, even at Rome itself, went upon a supposition that they built upon *Truth*, and never acted upon such a barefaced system of Politicks, with regard to Religion, as this does : “ No man in the world, except “ *Enthusiasts and madmen*,” says Bishop Taylor, “ ever obtruded a doctrine upon the church, “ but he pretended Scripture for it, or Tradition.” page 98. But what says the Bishop of Gloucester ?

He tells us, “ the defenders of an established “ Religion have all along gone to support it on “ motives of TRUTH, and not UTILITY ; “ Whereas the TRUE END for WHICH RELIGION is established is, NOT TO PROVIDE FOR THE TRUE FAITH, but “ CIVIL UTILITY^(m).”

Let us compare this notion, with the position lately advanced by his Grace of York, and we

(m) Alliance, 254.

shall see in what a miserable condition the christian Church is left till the second coming of Christ. His Grace informs us, that Religion is not able to rely on its own Energies, and it is the business of the State to provide for Gospel truths. But if we apply to the State for that purpose, we are told, by Bishop Warburton, that the true end for which Religion is established is, not to provide for the true Faith; but, for civil Utility. So that between these two Divines, the Gospel-truths have no support at all, either from internal Pillars, or external Buttresses. The Establishment hath clear'd its hands of such an incumbrance, and directs its Energies to the support of Civil Utility; and consequently, wherever the Civil Utility shall appear to contradict the Gospel, it tends to the ruin of the Christian Church. For so far as a Christian Church receives and establishes articles of faith, contrary to the doctrines of Christ, so far it becomes apostate; and so far as it establishes false doctrines, *knowing them to be such*, so far it ceases to be a Christian Church. In this, both Protestants and Papists, who have considered the subject most carefully, are agreed. Mr. Knot, in his ingenious book, called *Charity maintained*, &c. asserts, that any error which is maintain'd by the Church against God's Revelation, destroys the Church: and Mr. Chillingworth, in his excellent answer, allows it to be

be so, with this Proviso, if the Church receives it, knowing it to be an error; but he adds, that it is impossible the Church should do so, for, ipso facto, it were a Church no longer"—And yet, what have we seen in the Church for many centuries but such doctrines established, as not one of our governors can believe to be true, because they are contradictory. The principle of Civil Utility may require such double dealing, but it must be at the risque of an Apostacy; if either Mr. Chillingworth, Mr. Knot, or Sir Isaac Newton have argued soundly.

But let us not confound the sense of words in such an unguarded manner, as to call the establishment of Utility an establishment of Religion. It may be called an association, a convention, a party, a Society, a Club; but an establishment, which has no other end in view than CIVIL UTILITY, can never with any propriety, be called a RELIGIOUS establishment.—Religion is a private affair, between God and our own Souls; and the State can neither encourage, nor discourage it; how much soever it may influence the outward profession of it, and encourage hypocrisy. The Church therefore, considered as capable of alliance with the State, can only be considered as a political Society, in which Religion is quite out of the question. And the Bishop implicitly allows of this; for he tells us, in his dedication, that the Ob-
ject

ject of Religion is *Truth* ; and here, that the true end for which Religion is established is not to provide for (Truth or) the true Faith, but Civil Utility. Hence it follows, that such an Establishment, not having Truth for its object, is not a *Religious*, but a political Establishment.

Some learned men have argued from the words of St. Paul ; that we ought to obey those who have *rule over us*(*n*), and submit ourselves, because they watch for our Souls ; which argument he used, in order most effectually to persuade the Hebrews to receive and obey the Gospel, which he preached, for their Salvation ; Not as having dominion over your Faith, says the Apostle, but as helpers of your joy, I Cor. i. 24. Now if the Apostles had no dominion over their Faith, though they watched for their Souls, most certainly the Civil magistrate can have none, who only watches for Civil Utility. So that, whatever authority the Apostles had, (which they never claim'd as residing in themselves, but in the doctrines which they preach'd, never giving divine Authority to their private opinions) whether it be called Church authority or spiritual authority ; the magistrate, who does *not* watch for our *Souls*, but merely for *Civil Utility*, and can teach us nothing but what we can teach ourselves in matters of Faith,

(*n*) See Hoadly, Vol. II. p. 817, for the sense of such Phrases.

can have no claim to our obedience in that respect.

It may perhaps be said, that a Church may be built up by the agreement of Persons to unite in publick assemblies for the performance of Religious duties ; and it is very true, that such a Church or Society will have the authority to make what Laws or articles she pleases, not contrary to the Laws of the land, or the Religion they profess ; and they may bind one another to their agreement under pain of excommunication or expulsion ; just as Ben Johnson and his companions agreed upon articles and Rules for their Club at the Devil Tavern at Temple Bar : But then the Authority of those Rules was merely human, and must have continued the same, though they had transferred it from the Members to the Civil Magistrate. And the Bishops established Church, is not at all the better in this respect, if there is not some Care taken to provide for Truth and Christianity, as well as for Civil Utility.

But what is it that the Bishop here calls the Church ? It cannot be the visible Church of Christ, as defined in the XIX Article of the Church of England, to be a Congregation of faithful Men, in which the pure word of God is preached, &c. for the Religious principles of these are unchangeably determined ; but the Bishop's Church is a mere party in Politicks, of
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the Chameleon kind, that can change and change again, as the hopes of Riches and Grandeur shall direct. In short, a mere faction in the state, and a very dangerous One.

And what is this but an alliance of the very same Nature, as Judge Burnet has described in his humourous dedication to the second tale of a tub, between a hungry Author and his Patron. What was there intended to expose the conduct to Ridicule, is used by the Bishop as a serious argument, and an example to be followed by the Church. “ It
 “ is the custom of Mankind,” says the dedication, “ to follow the fortunes of a great man,
 “ as long as he continues to be a support to
 “ his dependants; but when once his Power
 “ is lost, the croud forsake his Levée, and even
 “ Shun the Idol to whom before they had paid
 “ their homage.”

But I cannot help observing before I leave his Lordship, that if his Lordship had been a real friend, even to the Temporalities of the established Church, he should never have suffered so dangerous a notion to become publick. For if ever the political governors of the Church become convinced, that our Religious Establishment hath nothing more in view than CIVIL utility, they will immediately cast their Eyes upon the revenues of the Church, and consult, whether Civil utility may not be more
 O effectually

effectually promoted by expending them upon our fleets and armies, than in support of Bishopricks, Deaneries, Prebends, and Canonries, &c.

But the notion is as false as it is antichristian and scandalous. The whole Body of the people know, that they pay their Clergy, not for promoting Civil utility, for that is taken care of by other Taxes; but for studying and preaching the Gospel, and explaining its doctrines; not for the sake of supporting a Hierarchy to make a Religion for them, but they support the whole Body of the Clergy for the sake of learning Gospel Truths.

But all these wild mistakes arise from considering the Church or Kingdom of Christ to be of this world, which Christ himself has declared, that it is not.

The plain truth of the matter seems to be this. The church of Christ, as by him fully and unalterably established, to which nothing can be added without presumption, is superior to all States; but the Church of England, as by Law establish'd, is dependent on the State, and has therefore no power to enter into alliances at all, any more than the army or navy. And nothing more can be mean'd by this church, as distinct from the Church of Christ, and dependent on the State, than a particular Society, encouraged by the State, which can make such
private

private Laws as the State allows of: but this will give it no spiritual authority, nor any authority at all, except by compact, over its own members. They may agree to receive or pay for the performance of particular acts, which they may call religious, (but the religion of all actions lies in the heart, and not in the outward action) and they may agree to expel or excommunicate from that Society upon such and such defaults. All this they may do, as a Civil Society or Church; but as a Christian Church, they have no right to do such things, except upon Christian principles. And therefore Wickliffe, who first sowed the seeds of Protestantism in this Country, declares, that Excommunication, Suspension, and such like Censures, are not founded on the laws of Christ, but cunningly invented by Antichrist. For as no man has a right, under a pretence of entering into a particular Society, to refuse to any Subject the common Rights that belong to him by the laws of the land; so neither hath any particular Christian Church, or member of it, a right to refuse to any Christian those common Rights which belong to him by the laws of Christ(o).

Now the king of England is head of the Church of England, as well as of the State;

(o) Fasciculus rerum Expet. 136.

and there is no other supreme power in his Kingdoms, either ecclesiastical or civil, with whom he can possibly enter into an alliance. The State may make laws about the affairs of the Church of England, and regulate the ecclesiastical Courts; and in order to do this properly, may, if it pleases, consult the Clergy about it: and in like manner, it may make decrees about the affairs of the Law, and in doing this, may consult the Counsellors and Judges; or it may make laws about Trade, and consult the Merchants. But to call this an Alliance between Church and State, or Law and State, or Trade and State, is a mere fallacy and deception. The State is superior to them all, and makes laws for them all, as a Superior; and for that very reason, because it is their Superior, it enters into no Alliance with any of them, but either gives them new laws, or ratifies the private statutes which they make among themselves, as it thinks most proper; and thus the State acts with all Societies alike.—But then these laws, as Mr. Hales observes, can only relate to the outward affairs of Church-government, and by no means to Church questions, or matters of Faith. All matters of Faith, as I observed, have been settled long ago by divine Authority; and the Ecclesiastical Authority, or Church Authority, so called because it relates to Ecclesiasticks, is
as

as much a part of the Authority of the State in such matters, as the Authority of a Court Martial, which only relates to the military. And if a Christian State should make laws which are contrary to the laws of Christ, knowing them to be so, that State would be in open and avowed Rebellion against Christ.

On the other hand; if it be asserted, that there is any alliance between the State and the Church of Christ, considered as the Kingdom of Christ, this is no less impossible. “ The
 “ Church of Christ,” as Bp. Hoadly observes,
 “ is the Kingdom of Christ. He is King in his
 “ own Kingdom. He is sole Lawgiver to his
 “ Subjects as Christians, and sole Judge in
 “ matters relating to Salvation. His laws and
 “ sanctions are plainly fixed; and relate to the
 “ favour of God, and not at all to the rewards
 “ and penalties of this world. All his Sub-
 “ jects are equally his Subjects, and as such,
 “ equally without Authority to alter, to add
 “ to, or to interpret his laws, so, as to claim
 “ the absolute submission of others to such in-
 “ terpretations. And all are his subjects, and
 “ in his Kingdom, who are ruled and governed
 “ by him. The nature of God’s worship was
 “ once declared by him, &c.(p)”

(p) Bp. Hoadly on the nature of Christ’s Kingdom.

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“ Our Lord Jesus Christ as King,” says Mr. Wm. Allen, “ and Christians as his Subjects, “ and Laws by which he governs them, make “ up this Spiritual Kingdom. The People “ who are the Subjects of this heavenly King- “ dom, own and acknowledge his authority, “ power, and empire to be, as indeed it is, par- “ amount to, and over all Authority and Power “ of Kings and Potentates on earth; and his “ laws superior to theirs. And although this “ heavenly King is no Enemy to earthly Kings “ and Potentates, farther than they make him “ so, by their being enemies to him and his go- “ vernment, but would have all his Subjects “ live in due obedience to them, so far as their “ laws do not cross his; yet, if they do; he “ does not allow any to break his laws to obey “ theirs; but would have them patiently to “ suffer the penalties of the laws, rather than “ prove disloyal to him, and will in con- “ clusion richly reward them for their suffer- “ ings (q).”

Now if all Christian States are Subjects of Christ as head of the Church, and obliged to pay an absolute obedience to him as their Lord and King; it follows, that Christ will enter into no Alliance with them: forasmuch as the

(q) Wm. Allen's State of the Church in future ages, p. 646.

Church, in this sense of the word, gives laws to the State as its inferior. And accordingly we find it is by him alone that the laws of his Church or Kingdom are framed, and not by any of his Servants, either singly or united; so that nothing which is devised by human authority as any part of the Christian Religion, can ever mix with it in alliance, or in any other manner; but will continue as distinct from it, as the different Authorities by which the divine and human laws are established.

The Jewish Laws were guarded in a great measure by the rewards and punishments of *this* world. The Christian Laws are guarded entirely by the rewards and punishments of a future State; and all the powers that any State can bring with it, when it pretends to enter into alliance with the Church, can be nothing more than those worldly motives which Christ hath discarded, as being sanctions unworthy of his laws, and only proper to guard the outward forms and ceremonies of worship in the imperfect State of Judaism.

Besides, it is impossible, from the very nature of Christianity, that it should admit of any mixture or alliance with any human laws or powers whatsoever; because whatever Obedience is paid to the laws of Christ, upon fear of punishment, or hopes of reward from any but himself, is no part of his Religion, nor will it
be

be considered by him, and rewarded. On the other hand; let a man take ever so much pains to discover the will of Christ, and observe his commands, and serve God with faith, and a good conscience; yet if he explains the Scripture better than the particular church he belongs to, and discovers to them their errors, instead of being rewarded for it, as he will be by Christ, he will subject himself to its severest censures: instances of this are to be found in all ages. And if the one rewards what the other punishes, what Alliance can there be between them, but what is merely nominal. On the other hand; when the Church punishes what Christ will reward, which may possibly happen, in many cases, where a parliament and convocation, or a synod, or a council declare an opinion to be heretical without proper vouchers from Scripture, or wherever a Church rewards what Christ will punish, whatever that Church may be at other times, it becomes, *pro hac vice*, the patron of Antichrist, and the Synagogue of Satan. See Hoadly's Rights of Subj. Vol. II. p. 762.

The XXth Article of the Church of England asserts, very justly, the power of the Church to declare Rites and Ceremonies: But declares in the same Article, that, though it be a Witness and Keeper of holy writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing *against* the same, so besides
the

the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation. From whence it appears, that the Church confines all authority in matters of faith merely to the Scriptures; and allows of no Authority to any of her decrees unless they can be proved by Scripture; and then the Authority on which they depend, and by which they oblige, is not the Authority of the Church (properly speaking) but the Authority of Scripture. What follows therefore in the Article [and Authority in matters of faith] is either an impropriety of speech, or a direct contradiction to what went before.

And from hence it plainly appears, that all other Authority in matters of Faith except holy Writ, is an imposition; and the doctrines it imposes may be safely rejected, if contrary to what appears to us to be the truth, and can no otherwise be considered than in the light of mere opinions of weak and fallible men; and to whose judgment no Authoritative interpretation of doubtful texts can be trusted, because Christ has not given such an Authority to any man, or any Set of men whatever. And consequently, all attempts to define Heresy more strictly in an authoritative manner, is the highest presumption. It is therefore the Protestant principle to go to Scripture itself, as the only Rule we have to trust to: and we had bet-

ter leave a thousand texts of scripture unexplained, than receive as authentic one erroneous explanation: for our ignorance will extend no farther; but one error may beget a thousand.

The following words of Sir Isaac Newton will shew this Conclusion in its true force, and give a farther confirmation of our Protestant principles. “ In the Infancy of the nation of
 “ Israel, when God had given them a law and
 “ made a Covenant with them to be their God,
 “ if they would keep his commandments; he
 “ sent Prophets to them to reclaim them as
 “ often as they revolted to the worship of other
 “ Gods; and upon their returning to him, they
 “ sometimes renewed the Covenant which they
 “ had broken.—These Prophets he continued
 “ to send till the days of Ezra, and after the
 “ prophecies were read in their Synagogues;
 “ those prophecies were thought sufficient.
 “ For if they would not hear Moses and the
 “ Prophets, they would hear no new ones, no,
 “ not though they should rise from the dead.
 “ At length, when a new truth was to be
 “ preached to the Gentiles, that Jesus was the
 “ Christ, God sent new Prophets and Teachers.
 “ But after their writings were also received and
 “ read in the Synagogues of the Christians,
 “ Prophecy ceased a second time. We have
 “ Moses, the Prophets, and Apostles, and the
 “ words

“ words of Christ himself; and if we will not
 “ hear them, we shall be more inexcusable than
 “ the Jews.

“ For the Prophets and Apostles have fore-
 “ told, that as Israel often revolted and brake
 “ the Covenant, and upon repentance renewed
 “ it, so there shall be a falling away(*r*), [an
 “ Apostacy] among the Christians soon after
 “ the days of the Apostles: and that in the lat-
 “ ter days God would destroy the impenitent
 “ revolters(*s*), and make a new Covenant with
 “ his people(*t*). And the giving Ear to the
 “ *Prophets*, is the fundamental character of the
 “ True Church. For God hath so ordered the
 “ prophecies, that in the latter days, the wise
 “ may understand; but the wicked shall do
 “ wickedly, and none of the wicked shall un-
 “ derstand(*u*).

“ The authority of Emperors, Kings, and
 “ Princes, is human, The authority of Coun-
 “ cils, Synods, Bishops, and Presbyters, is
 “ human. The authority of the Prophets is
 “ divine, and comprehends the SUM of Reli-
 “ gion; reckoning Moses and the Apostles
 “ among the Prophets; and if an Angel from
 “ heaven preach any other Gospel than what

(*r*) II. Theff. ii. 3. (*s*) Mat. xiii. 41, 42. II. Th.
 i. 7. Rev. xiv. 16. (*t*) Jer. xxxi. xxxii. Rev. xxi.
 Ro. xi. 27. (*u*) Dan. xii. 9, 10.

“ they have delivered, let them be accursed.
 “ Their writings contain the Covenant between
 “ God and his people, with instructions for
 “ keeping this Covenant, instances of Gods
 “ judgment upon them that break it, and pre-
 “ dictions of things to come. While the Peo-
 “ ple of God keep the Covenant, they *continue*
 “ *his* People; when they break it, they cease
 “ to be his people, or Church, and become
 “ the synagogue of Satan, who say they are
 “ Jews, and ARE NOT; and no power on
 “ earth is authorized to ALTER this Cove-
 “ nant.”

Can any man read this, and yet venture to
 establish the interpretations of men, rather than
 the words of the Prophets; and thereby run the
 risque of altering this Covenant? Can any man
 read this, and imagine, with his Grace of
 York, that *Religion is insufficient to rely on its
 own Energies?* and that we have no right to ex-
 pect any miraculous assistance? and that it is
 the business of *the State to provide assistance to
 Gospel truths, by procuring them a hearing?* &c.—
 Do not the Scriptures plainly prove to us, that
 God has continually interfered in defence of
 his own Revelations? And as Mr. Gibbon ex-
 presses it, very properly, Has not the Christian
 Faith obtained its remarkable victory over all
 the Religions of the earth, by the convincing
 evidence of the doctrine, and the ruling Pro-
 vidence

vidence of its great Author? And have we not reason to believe, that if its own Energies are not sufficient, it will be carried on by other second Causes, or else in the same miraculous manner; especially in the Conversion of the Jews and Gentiles?

But that we may fairly examine this question, let us compare the Energies of Christianity, with the Energies that oppose it. St. Paul has described the nature of the Energies which oppose it in his second Epistle to the Theffalonians. The mystery of iniquity, he says, doth already work or put forth her Energies, *ἐνεργεῖται* (x), only he who letteth [the heathen Roman Emperors] will let, until he be taken out of the way, and then shall the wicked, i. e. the Apostate, be reveled, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming, even HIM whose coming is according to the energy (*καὶ ἐνεργείαν*) of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved; and for this cause God shall send them the Energy of error, *ἐνεργείαν πλάνης*, that they may believe a lie, i. e. the doctrines of the Apostacy.

(x) II. Th. ii. 7.

Here

Here we see the outlines of the apostacy, and the means leading to it, and the Energy of error that was to oppose the Gospel. We see the hypocrisy of liars, and the corruptions of the Church established by Civil Authority under the Christian Roman Emperors, after the heathen Emperors were taken away; many of which errors still remain in it. But when, on the other hand, we weigh the power of the Christian Energies, we should consider, that for above 1400 years, we have never experienced them unadulterated with human authoritative determinations, and the Energy of Error. We know by the Reformation, that as far as Christians have relinquished the commandments of men, and been directed by the Gospel, the Energies of Satan have become lifeless, and his signs and lying wonders have lost the influence they had in the days of Ignorance and Superstition: and we have reason to think, if the genuine Energies of Christianity were exerted without restraint, that they would easily prevail over the Energies of Error. But that which turns the scale against the truth, is the adventitious Energy of Civil Authority. That very authority which his Grace of York considers as necessary to the support of Gospel Truths, hath established all the Idolatry of the Asiatic Churches, and transplanted it into those of Europe. It is that which has so long supported error, and
oppressed

oppressed the Truth; and ever will do so, as long as its authority in matters of Religion shall continue, and prevent a fair examination of Church questions. It was this that debased the Reason and Understanding of the heathen world, obscured the researches of Philosophy, and established the cruel and lascivious rites of the Pagans: It was the influence of Civil Authority in opposition to Philosophy, and an adherence, under penalties, to the Religion in vogue, though ever so absurd and impious, that kept the world in darkness.

So that a writer observes very justly, “ The
 “ Corruptions of Religion so prevalent in the
 “ polite and civilized nations of the heathen
 “ world, their Superstition and Idolatry, were
 “ not owing to the weakness of human reason
 “ or its insufficiency to the purposes of Religion;
 “ but rather to the *strength* of human policy, en-
 “ couraging these Corruptions, and to the
 “ weakness of human resolution in not suffi-
 “ ciently exerting itself against this palpable
 “ abuse of human and magistratical influence,”
 &c. And what is it else that now overpowers the knowledge of the truth, and renders of so little service to the world that light, which has so remarkably shone in this country for several years? I defy the Philosopher or Politician to account for the Idolatry which was established in the Asiatic Churches, and still continues in
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the Romun Church, upon any other principle than the silencing the common sense and reason of Mankind by the Civil Power, and thereby restraining men from the right of *preaching* or *propagating* their *religious* and Philosophical opinions.

But though the genuine Energies of Christianity may continue for a long time restrained, yet they are all the while working, like leaven, and making their way secretly; and we are informed, in this same chapter, that the coming of Christ shall put an end to all the Energies of Satan; and the Christian Energies will then exert themselves without an obstacle. When the force of Authority ceases, the force of Truth will prevail.

But more fully to shew the weakness of his Grace's hyhothesis, and defend Christianity from such an unworthy imputation, as if it stood in need of Civil Authority to support it, it will be sufficient to observe, that Christianity never made so rapid a progress, as it did against all the Civil Authority of the world before the days of Constantine (x). The very learned Dr. Lowth,

(x) “ The ancient Church thought it an indecent and
 “ unworthy thing to call in the Civil arm for the assist-
 “ ance of Religion, and for the punishment of Errors in
 “ Religion, or affronts offered by them to the Deity.—
 “ St. Hilary, in his book against Auxentius, represents
 “ them

Lowth, Bishop of London, observes, that “ the
 “ rapid progress of Christianity in the first ages,
 “ in spite of all the opposition it had to struggle
 “ with, from the prejudice of the world sup-
 “ ported by all the power of it, in the midst of
 “ dangers and distresses, reproach and persecu-
 “ tion, has been deservedly considered as the
 “ immediate effect of a divine power co-operat-
 “ ing with it, and a more stupendous miracle

“ them who did this, not as Bishops of Christ, but the
 “ Servants of Antichrist.”

We ought, says Hilary, to pity the labour of our age, and groan under the fond opinion of the present times, in which men think to defend God *by men*; and labour to preserve the Church of Christ by *secular ambition*. I beseech you, *Bishops*, who conceive yourselves to be so, what suffrages did the Apostles use in preaching the Gospel? and by what POWERS were they assisted, when preaching Christ they converted the heathen world from Idols to God? Did they assume any Authority from the PALACE, when they sang hymns to God in prison? Did Paul gather a Church to Christ by the King's Edict, who was himself a spectacle in the theatre? Did he defend himself by the Protection of Nero or Vespasian, by whose hatred against us, the preaching of our faith then flourished?—But NOW, which is to be lamented, *earthly* suffrages commend *divine* Faith, and Christ is represented as DESTITUTE of power; whilst the FAVOUR of men is purchased in his cause. The Church terrifies, and by Exiles and Prisons she COMPELLS a belief, which was believed in Exiles and Prisons.—*She* glories that She is believed by the World, which could not be the church of Christ if the World did not hate her, &c. Ad auxen-
 tium, p. 347.

Q

“ than

“ than any of the several wonders by which it
 “ was promoted (y).” Whereas, no sooner were
 the Gospel truths under the patronage of Civil
 authority, than they became shamefully cor-
 rupted. Ambition took place of piety, and
 every thing was carried on by party rage and
 private views, till Civil Authority, at last,
 established Idolatry, and blasphemy, the Apof-
 tacy, and the worship of the beast; and the
 Church of Christ became the Synagogue of
 Satan. “ For how much soever riches and
 honours flowed in upon the Church, and how
 great soever the advantages of power were to
 them; yet the establishment of Christianity by
 the imperial Laws, not only had a tendency to,
 but was in fact, the means of corrupting the
 doctrines of the Gospel, and of introducing
 notions different from those which our Saviour
 and his Apostles preached (z).” The Lord
 Bishop of London, in his excellent Sermon
 just quoted, observes, that Constantine em-
 braced the Christian faith; “ but alas! from
 “ this very æra of the security, prosperity, and
 “ splendor of the Christian Church, we must
 “ date the decay of the true spirit of Christi-
 “ anity. It still continued, indeed, to increase
 “ for some time outwardly in extent and num-
 “ bers, but daily suffered, *within*, a much

(y) Visitation Sermon, p. 4.

(z) Dr. Sykes.

“ greater

“ greater loss, in the visible diminution of
 “ faith, holiness, humility, and charity. Ho-
 “ nour, wealth, and power soon excited pride,
 “ avarice, and ambition; and the contests for
 “ these worldly advantages were but too often
 “ carried on with the greater animosity, under
 “ pretence of contending for the faith (a). It
 was this that put a stop to the conversion of
 the Jews, gave rise to Mahometism, and caused
 the defection of many countries from Christianity,
 where it had been once established. “ Super-
 “ stition, contention, and division still en-
 “ creased *within*, and gave great advantages to
 “ Mahometism, that assaulted Christianity from
 “ without, and at length laid waste the Eastern
 “ Church (b).”

This is the reason that his Grace and other
 partizans for the exercise of Civil authority in
 matters of Faith, endeavour to misrepresent an
 enquiry into this piece of history, as unprofit-
 able, and sceptical: for nothing can more
 effectually ruin the system of Hobbism, and
 warn men against trusting Gospel-Truths any
 more into the patronage of Civil Authority,
 than the knowledge that Civil Authority when
 so trusted, hath constantly betrayed them into
 the hands of Emperors and Popes.

(a) Dr. Lowth's Sermon, p. 9. (b) Ben. Mord.
 Lett. VII. p. 147.

His Grace speaks of this Inquiry, not only as *the wandering of curious and unsettled minds*, but as *sceptical* also (c); which is much more easily said than proved. For how does it appear, that the belief of the Apostacy foretold by the Apostles, has any more *scepticism* in it, than the belief of any other prophecy? Or where is the Scepticism in attributing it, as St. Paul has done, to Philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of this world? After the Fathers, and Councils, and Synods, and Popes, and Emperors, and Civil Authority, and not after Christ? Col. iii. 8.

In answer to such suggestions, it becomes more necessary than ever to satisfy the unlearned Christians, that the slow progress which Christianity has made in the world for many Centuries, and the Loss of it in many Countries where it once prevailed (both which are Deistical objections to it, and require a serious and solid answer) are not owing to the insufficiency of the Christian Religion to rely on its own Energies, but to the exertion of the Civil power in establishing a multiplicity of Mediators, the worship of the dead, and all the errors of the Apostacy; and from the wicked compliances of the Hierarchy to satisfy their own Ambition and Avarice: or, in other words, it is owing to the corruption of its doctrines,

(c) His Grace's Sermon, p. 8, 9.

and

and the wickedness of its Professors (*d*). And his Grace will find it as difficult to disprove this, or to account for the fact upon any other principle, as to prove a man a Sceptic for examining and answering the objections of a Deist.

There is another question, no less fatal to his Grace's hypothesis, which he would likewise wish to remove out of sight, by declaring, that "it does not concern us, and the examination of it is dangerous." The question is this, "Whether, before the conclusion of things, all mankind are to be Christians, or whether they are only to *profess* Christianity (*e*)." And here the Hypothesis seems to labour. For if it should be found, as it must be upon examination, that Civil authority can reach no farther than outward forms, and external profession, it will follow undeniably, that true Religion, or the Dominion of Christ over the heart, can have no support at all. But as this fatal Consequence of his Grace's hypothesis is not to be avoided, it must be artfully flighted, and removed out of sight, as of no signification; and we are told that "*the question does not concern us*;" as if it were the same thing to a Christian, whether genuine Christianity should prevail at last over the world, according to the prophecies, or only a Hierarchy, and a hypocritical profession of it.

(*d*) Ben. Mord. Lett. VII. p. 147. (*e*) Sermon, p. 8.

The learned Bishop Lowth has answered this question very satisfactorily. He tells us, “ it is
 “ our Saviour’s meaning that we should pray,
 “ that the Gospel state be still advanced and
 “ carried on, till at length it arrive at that ma-
 “ turity and completion, that UNIVESALITY,
 “ unity, and *Spiritual Perfection*, which Christ
 “ has decreed and promised that it shall at
 “ one time attain (*f*).” To the same purpose
 the Reader may consult the following texts,
 which will fix the matter beyond all doubt.
 Ps. xxii. 27. lxxii. 11. lxxxiv. 9. xcvi. 3. Is.
 xlix. 6. Ps. ii. 8. Phil. ii. 10, 11, &c.

But the most curious part of the argument is
 this, that “ it is dangerous to be busy in ex-
 “ ploring those things which it is a part of
 “ God’s providence to keep concealed (*g*).”
 Does God then reveal himself by his prophets
 in order to keep concealed what he reveals?
 Or can we imagine, that we shall be able to
 investigate what God’s Providence would con-
 ceal? Surely there can be no such danger; and
 he fears, where no fear is. But why then dan-
 gerous? Are we to let the prophecies of God
 lie neglected, without endeavouring to under-
 stand them?

The prophet Daniel was commended for ex-
 ploring the sense of the prophecy of Jeremiah (*b*);

(*f*) Dr. Lowth’s Visit. Sermon, in 1758, p. 1, 2. 11.

(*g*) His Grace’s Sermon. p. 8. (*b*) Dan. ix. 2.

and

and where then can be the danger of exploring other prophecies ? Or, to what purpose can his Grace imagine, that the Church is informed in the book of Revelation, of the conquest of Christ over Satan, and the Beast, and the false prophet, if not to encourage it in the Faith, and Patience of the Saints, and a firm expectation, and hope, that true Religion and Virtue shall at length prevail over error and hypocrisy ? And if a sincere Christian is not concerned in this event, what can he be concerned in ?

But, 2dly, Suppose that, according to the present State of things, the Christian Religion is not sufficient to rely on its own energies, whilst it is restrained in almost all Countries from the free use of them by Civil Authority, which will *not suffer sectaries to preach and propagate their own opininns* (i); yet have we not reason to believe, from the prophecies, that this will not always be the case ; but that Providence will, in its own time, and manner, support the Christian cause, and promote its progress to Spiritual Perfection, by the free use of its Energies ? Are we not promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Christian Church (k) ? Can this promise be fulfilled, except by the Christian Energies, or a providential interposition ?—When his Grace therefore asks, “ Is it sufficient to rely on its

(i) Serm. p. 15.

(k) Matt. xvi. 18.

“ own Energies, and to reject the assistance of
 “ Civil Authority?” and declares, “ we have no
 “ right to expect any miraculous assistance; we
 “ are not so presuming(*l*).” It is sufficient to
 answer, that most assuredly the Christian Religion is sufficient to rely on its own Energies, if it is not debarred the free use of them; and if they fail through such restraint, or any other cause, we have a right to expect that he will continue with his Church always, even to the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 20. and that he will defend it against all the authority that shall oppose it; though the Kings of the Earth, or their Ministers, shall set themselves against it, and the Rulers take Counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, Ps. ii. and this we have a right to expect, either by his disposition of second causes, or by his own immediate power, without the least presumption: for where is the presumption in expecting, that what Christ hath promised he will punctually perform? The suspicion of it rather favours of Infidelity and Scepticism, than the hopes of it do of presumption.

Indeed, if by Religion or Christianity, be meant Calvinism or Lutherism, or the Church of England, or any particular Church with all its errors; divided from the rest under Paul or

(*l*) Serm. p. 11.

Apollos, or Cephas, so destructive by their different and opposite Articles and Confessions to the Catholicism of the Church of Christ; I know of no promise in the New Testament that should encourage us to believe, that God will support it at all; the prophecies of Daniel and St. John seem rather to threaten the contrary^(m). But this is not the question with his Grace; he considers Religion as intirely different from our worldly concerns, in page 10, and distinguishes true Religion, or the Dominion of Christ over the heart and mind, from what he allows “to be a very different thing, Christian Sovereignty, Christian Establishment, “and the formal profession,” page 9.—Now if there be such a material difference between the Religion of Christ, and the formal profession of it; Christianity, or the Religion of Christ, may have a right to expect a miraculous support, though the peculiarities of the different Sects may fail and be dissolved, in order to reduce them all under one head, which they never can be while they indulge their fancies in making Articles and Creeds, which will necessarily keep them divided. “We “may therefore rest secure, that the Gospel, “like the ark of God, will not fall, though “unsupported by the arm of flesh; and happy

(m) Ben. Mord. Lett. IV. p. 192.

“ would it be for all mankind, if that opinion
 “ prevailed more generally(*n*).

Besides, we frequently find, that what Civil Authority looks upon as providing for Gospel Truths, is in fact providing against them. It is undeniable that if Civil Authority encouraged Gospel Truths under Constantine, it must have encouraged the contrary under Constantius: and the same may be said of the Reigns of Q. Mary and Q. Elizabeth, in this Country. And if this should be the case at any time, as it may be, when very little suspected, that Civil Authority patronises falsehood instead of Truth, it must expect at one time or other, if it does not quit its errors, to fall a sacrifice to them. For Civil Utility will not be able to support doctrines which the people know to be false: no not the greatest Civil Power upon earth.

P. 11. His Grace says, “ We must consider the
 “ propagation of our Religion as a duty not
 “ only belonging to common Charity, but
 “ especially enjoined by our Saviour himself.”

Reply. It is true; and for that very reason the magistrate can have no right to interrupt any one in the practice of it, as long as he behaves peaceably. But it by no means follows, that, because it is the duty of every man to propagate his religion, therefore Providence

(*n*) The Hon. John Hay, Chief Justice of New-York. Remembrancer, No. xxxiii. p. 96.

stands in need of every man's assistance, and religion is unable to support itself by its own energies: and much less that the civil magistrate has a right to propagate it by silencing such as differ from him in opinion.

P. 15. His Grace argues, that "It has been
 " the practice of Sectaries to clame much more
 " than they are disposed to give. And some,
 " who when possessed of power used it sufficient-
 " ly, have afterwards made pretensions to an
 " unrestrained Right of preaching, and propa-
 " gating their opinions."

Reply. The fault which the Sectaries are here very justly accused of, is the very same which his Grace is defending, viz. the restraining other men from preaching and propagating their opinions; and what Bp. Taylor condemns in the German Divines, as soon as they got free from the inquisition(o).

"How these pretensions are founded" his Grace adds "it may be difficult to say, except it be on some mistaken texts of Scripture, which apply to the observance of the Jewish Ritual, but are now made to carry a releasement from the laws of the State, under the notion of Christian Liberty."

Reply. If the propagation of our religion be a duty *not only* belonging to common Cha-

(o) See p. 33.

rity, but especially enjoined by our Saviour himself, as his Grace observes, p. 11. it is no difficult matter to inform ourselves how these pretensions are founded.—They are founded on the inherent Right in every man to perform his duty to God, which I presume, is a sufficient plea to release his conscience from every law of the State, which would restrain him from it, if it be done in a peaceable manner.

P. 15, 16. His Grace observes, “ that the
 “ secret intercourse between a Man’s spirit and
 “ his Creator, excludes all foreign cognisance:
 “ But it is not so, when Sects are formed,
 “ assemblies convened, a distinct system of
 “ doctrines framed, and men appointed to pro-
 “ pagate them.”

Reply. This is a very good description of the State of Christianity, when our Saviour gave Commission to his disciples to teach a doctrine contrary both to Judaism and Paganism, and all the Religions in the world. Let us hear whether such a behaviour was criminal, and whether the ruling Powers had a right to prevent it.

“ In this state of things,” his Grace goes on,
 “ every legal Government, by its inherent
 “ right of providing for its own SAFETY, is
 “ justified in INQUIRING what these doctrines
 “ are. They may be immoral, they may be
 “ se-

“ feditious, they may be subversive of Society
“ itself.”

Reply. They may so, and then they should be severely punished: but they may be as far from any thing of this nature as the doctrines of the Establishment: And when they differ upon the interpretation of texts, as understood by sober, learned, and honest men, who shall pretend to determine authoritatively on which side the truth lies? And how will the right of Inquiring what these opinions are, (which perhaps has been continually exercised for many Centuries) prevent the propagating them? except indeed the Inquiry partakes of the nature of an INQUISITION, and proceeds to Punishment.

“ Upon these Opinions,” says his Grace,
“ when contrary to the well being of the Com-
“ munity, the authority of the State is properly
“ exercised.”

Reply. Here we find, that the whole his Grace has to say upon the restraining the right of Sectaries to preach and propagate their opinions, is nothing more than a power to preserve the Peace of the State, and to punish Immorality and Sedition; agreeably to the declaration of Charles the II^d. that no man should be disquieted, or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of Religion, which do not disturb the peace of the Kingdom, confirmed

firmed Oct. 5, 1660. But not the Shadow of an argument is here advanced against the clame of an unrestrained right of preaching and propagating their opinions in a peaceable manner. However, there is still a snake in the grass; allow but the right of punishing immorality and sedition, which properly belongs to the magistrate, and the Persecutor will immediately represent Protestantism to be an immorality and sedition, if he be a Papist; and Popery to be immorality and sedition, if he be a Protestant; and so Arianism, Socinianism, Sabelianism and Athanasianism, will all of them be represented to the opposite Sects as dangerous to the State. This was the accusation against Christ himself, Luke xxiii. 5. He stirreth up the people. And thus they are blended together by Farrel, as I have already quoted: I hope, says he, that those who are commended for inflicting punishment upon *thieves* and *sacrilegious* persons, will do their duty by taking off (that is murdering) a man who has so obstinately persisted in his heresy, and undone so many people. But for God's sake, which of them was it that was guilty of the greatest disturbance and breach of the peace; Servetus by preaching up the Supremacy of the Father, or Calvin in getting him murdered for it? Men may disclame Persecution till doomsday; but it is absolutely impossible to silence Sectaries upon any
important

important Subjects, without it. No sooner is one burnt, but another rises to defend his Cause. They think it their duties to obey God rather than man; and give the same answer which was given by Peter and John, when commanded not to preach in the name of Christ, “ Whether
 “ it be right in the sight of God, to hearken
 “ unto you more than unto God, judge ye;
 “ for we cannot but speak the things which we
 “ have seen and heard”, Acts iv. 19, 20. In short, if the State hath a Right to prevent the propagation of the religious opinions of the Sects or Sectaries, when carried on in a peaceable manner, they must have a right to do it, as I observed, in such a way as to put an end to the supposed evil, whether by fines, imprisonment, or death; and as two opposite and contrary rights cannot exist at the same time, either Christ and his Apostles had no right to preach, and were justly executed for propagating Opinions contrary to those of the State; or the State had no Right to prevent their preaching.

If the principle be once allowed, that Gospel truths stand *in need of human authority to support them, because the Gospel Energies are insufficient*, it is in vain to complain of the violence and fanaticism of the Sectaries: for, that one principle will make way for both. It was upon this principle that the German Fanatics arose to establish the 5th monarchy, and by assisting

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to the Cause of God; and no other principle can support a right to silence peaceable Sectaries from propagating their opinions. It was upon the same principle of supporting the Cause of God, because the Christian Energies were not sufficient to that end, that the persecutions were carried on in the Eastern Church, and the name of God was used to sanctify their murders. And to this radical principle his Grace should have ascribed the Calamities, with which he says, “ Mankind has been harassed for so many
 “ Centuries; the Crusades against infidels and
 “ dissenting Christians, the devastations and
 “ massacres; and that cause of all, the received
 “ doctrine of the Lawfulness of Persecution in
 “ the cause of God(*p*).” This is all very well said; but his Grace does not seem to reflect, that all this arises from the *πρωτον ψευδος* which he is defending, that Gospel truths stand in need of human authority to support them; for this fanatical Principle being once admitted, all the violence of Farrel’s reasoning, in his letter to Calvin, will follow of Course. The Expence of blood will be looked upon as of small account, when set in comparison with the cause of God; and men will look upon themselves as called upon by Providence to assist in so glorious a Cause. But our Saviour’s precept is the very

(*p*) Serm. p. 6.

reverse,

reverse, Let the tares and wheat both grow together till the harvest, lest while ye gather up the tares ye root up the wheat also. Mat. xiii. 29, 30. However, it has been frequently the case among the different Governors of the Church, at different times, out of the abundance of their mistaken zeal, to root up the wheat, and let the tares remain: not knowing what spirit they were of.

“ If it is our duty” his Grace says “ to propagate our Religion, it must, like other duties, owe its operation and effect to such honest means as human Prudence may suggest. When it is said, be ye harmless as doves, it is said, be ye wise as Serpents. Foresight and Discretion are proper instruments in this warfare, though violence and injury are not.”

Reply. It is without doubt our duty to propagate our Religion by all honest means; but violence and injury are not honest means, and peaceable Sectaries cannot be silenced without injury and violence. I must therefore restore the text to its original order(*q*); by which it will appear, that the wisdom of the Serpent is to be restrained by the harmlessness of the Dove, and not the harmlessness of the Dove

(*q*) Be ye wise as Serpents and harmless as Doves. Mat. x. 16.

by the wisdom of the Serpent. In a conference of the Jews, the wisdom of the Serpent suggested it to be expedient, that Christ should be put to Death: but the harmlessness of the Dove would have agreed to no such thing, unless the Sentence had appeared to be just; and besides, though human Prudence be the rule of action in human governments, the Church of Christ is to be governed by more noble Considerations, such as are alone capable of establishing the Laws of Society, and the happiness of mankind, upon the Principles of Rectitude and obedience to God. See p. 43.

But the truth is, that when any Sectary gets the lead, it is not contented to propagate its religious opinions by such honest means as human Prudence may suggest, and by the harmlessness of the Dove, by which Christianity was at first propagated; but thinks itself justified in restraining the liberty of other men, who are as fully adorned with all advantages necessary to the investigation of truth, and the interpretation of Scripture, as they are themselves; and by this attempt they bring themselves into such circumstances, that it is next to impossible, when sufficiently heated by Contradiction, to avoid calling into their aid, not only the worldly wisdom of the Serpents, but every instrument of violence and injury to silence those whom they are not able to confute. And yet, pass
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but a narrow part of the Sea, and they become themselves subject to the same injustice.

Quam temere in nosmet Legem fancimus iniquam.

His Grace says, p. 10, 11. " Though Religion is of a nature entirely different from our worldly concerns, yet the connexion between Religion and this world is as intimate as between soul and body."

Reply. It is true, that matter and spirit may be connected or joined, but matter will still continue to be matter, and spirit to be spirit: and so it is in the affairs of Religion and this world.—But if his Grace means, that Religion and the affairs of this world are carried on by the same motives, or are directed to the same end, he should shew, that the design of gaining the favour of God is intimately connected with the design of gaining riches, honour, and power, and that an action performed merely upon worldly motives, will be a religious action, and gain the divine favour. But this is so far from the truth, that though worldly motives should produce the very same external action that religious motives may produce, yet it would lose all its pretensions to a reward from God as a religious action, and be considered by him as purely political or prudential. For no action

can be religious any farther than it proceeds from a religious motive. See p. 73.

“ But Civil Authority” his Grace says “ operates so far as to open sources and clear channels, and procure the Gospel a hearing, by sending out Preachers, &c. p. 11.

Reply. This indeed is very commendable, whether it be done at a publick or private expence. But Christianity made a greater progress before any thing of this nature was done by civil authority, than it has ever done since: However, if *opening Sources, and clearing Channels*, means nothing more than sending forth Preachers, and maintaining Schools, his Grace’s position is ruined by his own concession, viz. by informing us “ that the number of Churches “ in America is now encreased to some hundreds, CHIEFLY by the exertions of *private* “ Charity, besides the provision for itinerant “ Ministers, for School-masters, and Cate- “ chists.” For surely the same Christian Energies which have influenced private men to do this, will operate in opening any *other* Sources, or clearing any *other* Channels, that may be obstructed. *Publick Benefactions* may, without doubt, be useful, as well as *private Charity*, but can by no means be *necessary*, especially if private Charities be CHIEFLY effectual. But this is a very different thing from Authority in matters of Faith; and besides,
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when God has decreed the Event, as he certainly has in the propagation of Christianity, he will certainly accomplish it in his own time and manner, whether Civil Authority favour or oppose it.—The Lord of the harvest will send forth labourers into his harvest, when ever he judges it to be fit and proper; not because Religious Energies are unable to support religion, and he stands in need of human assistance; but because these Energies have convinced the Christians that such actions are agreeable to their duty as Christians. In the mean time we know that these *Sources* have been already opened, and these *Channels* frequently cleared by Orthodox and Heterodox, (as they are called) and men of all persuasions; by Protestants and Papists, Quakers and Presbyterians, Anabaptists and Independents, Arians and Socinians; sometimes by Sects who held one set of Errors, and sometimes another, but never by any people free from all. The Gospel has been preached, and so continues to be, through envy and strife, as well as through love and good will; and frequently with more contention for the peculiarities of the different Sects, than for Christianity in general. But what then? as the Apostle says, notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or truth, Christ is preached, and I therein rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice.

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In short, the very notion that it is the business of Civil Authority to provide for Gospel-truths, because its own *Energies are insufficient to support it*; as it leads to the grossest Fanaticism on the one hand, (which seems to be his Grace's chief failing) by persuading those who believe the Revelation, that Providence stands in need of their assistance, to open *Sources* and clear *Channels*; So on the other hand, it must encourage infidelity in those, who have too much good sense to believe, that God would ever give mankind a Revelation that should require the interpretation of the Civil Magistrate, who generally knows very little of the matter, as the Hobbists themselves confess, and does not pretend to establish it for its own sake, but for the sake of Civil Utility.

Add to this, that the method taken by Civil Authority of establishing Religion by temporal rewards and punishments, after Sources are opened, and Channels cleared, is impracticable and absurd, it is by urging temporal motives in order to make men act upon quite different ones; as if I should bribe a man, in order to prevail with him to do an action out of mere gratitude. See p. 103—4, *Hoadly Rights, &c.* Vol. II. p. 762.

I believe the Roman Church has taken as much pains in clearing of *Sources*, and opening of *Channels*, as any other in the world; and
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particularly under the reigns of Charles the Vth. and Philip the IId, as we find in the valuable histories lately published. In the reign of Charles, it is said there were above 50,000 Protestants slain for their Religion by Civil Authority; and Philip, to make himself the more acceptable to the Deity, declared his resolution to dedicate his life to the defence of the Catholic Faith, and the extirpation of Heresy," or, in the sense in which the Protestants would explain it, the defence of Idolatry, and the extirpation of *Gospel truths*; for he imagined Religion was insufficient to rely on its own Energies without the assistance of Racks and Gibbets, and that Sources and Channels should be clear'd with Blood.

But by collecting what he imagined to be gospel Truths, from the Traditions and doctrines of men instead of the word of God, he mistook the cause he mean'd to support, and made use of his Authority to promote Idolatry and Blasphemy. A misfortune, which we shall always be liable to, whenever we leave to follow the Scripture; and, to avoid the lesser inconveniences of differing from one another openly, apostatize to the doctrines of Men, and return into the same Shackles, from which, as Protestants, we had happily been delivered.

But to return. The Apostacy from the Scriptures to the Doctrines of men seems at present
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to be at a stand. Our governors do not seem to have concerned themselves either to encourage or diminish it, nor to have any apprehension of the inconsistency between the Laws of the land, which require the belief of many human Compositions, and the Articles of Religion which allow of no Rule of Faith but holy writ, the fundamental principle of Protestantism.

If we reject the Councils as Rules of Faith and Tests of Heresy, and adhere to the Scripture only, we shall be, as we think ourselves to be, rational and consistent Protestants. If we receive the Councils, as the Laws direct, we shall be involved in the same Errors and inconsistencies in which the Greek and Roman Churches are involved; and must go on to explain the contradictory Creeds which have been established by the Councils, in the same unintelligible manner as they do, viz. by transmutation of elements, commutation of Idioms, divine fecundity, the Sufferings of an impassible Being, eternal generation, unity of so transcendent a nature as to be a plurality, the wonderful effect of an Emperichoresis, and other doctrines of a similar nature, invented to defend their errors and inconsistencies, which the Apostles never heard of, and the Clergy themselves understand no better than the most ignorant me-

mechanick (y); and in general have heard so little of lately, that they would be looked upon as new doctrines.

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(y) This Observation leads us to shew the weakness of the Argument sometimes used, for denying the use of Reason to the bulk of mankind on Religious subjects, viz. “because they are no more fit to judge of Religion than of Sir Isaac Newton’s Principia.” But how does this come about? Our Saviour reasoned with the bulk of mankind upon this Subject, and so did the Apostles; and they have the same Capacities now which they had then, and therefore the change must be in the subject upon which they reasoned. And the naked truth is, that what is now called by the name of Christian Religion by the men who make this objection, is not the same thing which the Apostles preached, and called by *that* name; but a Syllabus of Metaphorical questions, which the New Testament every where avoids. And if the reasoning be solid, that, because the bulk of mankind are not capable of understanding such subjects, they are not capable to judge of religious truths, it will follow, that the learned are no fitter judges of religious truths than the ignorant; for they know just as much of the Emperichorexis, the transmutation of Elements, &c. as the most ignorant: And this is the effect of mixing divine and human placits. We first make Articles which are unintelligible, and then would deprive the people of their natural Rights of private judgment, because they are not able to understand them. When Dominicus Soto, and Catarinus, Bishops of Minori, who were both present at the Council of Trent, differed in their opinions upon some articles that had been there discussed, each of them wrote to the Council, declaring his opinion to be that of the Synod. So that the Fathers were all divided into two parts. This

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Those indeed who plead for the imposition of Articles of human invention, will tell us, that they are all taken from the Scripture and receive their Authority from thence. But why then are they not drawn up in the words of Scripture, but expressed in barbarous and new

seemed to put all Men out of hope to understand the meaning of the Council; seeing the principal men that were present in it did not agree.—Bret. Transf. of Father Paul, p. 230. The like difference of opinion happened between Soto and Father Andreas, with regard to the sense of the Council, p. 216. So that I do not see why the common people may not see the truth as it is in the plain Text of the new Testament, as well as the learned Divines, even after the matter has been discussed in a general Council. Truth is as much in danger from the Artifice of the learned, as from the Simplicity of the unlearned; and when an argument is disentangled from its Sophistry, they will judge of truth as well as the learned.

All are the Subjects of Christ, says Bishop Hoadly, and in his Kingdom, who are ruled and governed by *him*; their Faith was once delivered by *him*, the conditions of their happiness was once laid down by *him*, the nature of God's worship was once declared by *him*. And it is easy to judge whether of the two is most becoming a Subject of the Kingdom of Christ that is a member of his Church, to seek all these particulars in those plain declarations of their King and Lawgiver himself, or to hunt after them through the infinite contradictions, the numberless perplexities, the endless disputes of weak men, in several ages, till the enquirer himself is lost in the Labyrinth, and perhaps sits down in despair and Infidelity. Rights of Subjects, p. 30.

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invented Terms, unknown to the Apostles, and never mentioned in the Scriptures, and capable of no certain and determinate sense but what Authority shall impose upon them?

Surely it is one of the most extraordinary things in the world, that in all Religions, whether true or false, the people are no sooner satisfied that a Revelation comes from God, than they immediately substitute some human Composition in its stead, and impose it upon the faith of their people, as if it was the Revelation itself, or at least of the same Authority. Thus is the Sonna introduced among the Mahometans, the Talmud among the Jews, the Council of Trent among the Papists, and so many Articles, Catechisms, Confessions, &c. among the Protestants, as has rent the Church in pieces, and divided it into sects and parties, to the entire loss of its Catholicism; which was formerly looked upon as of such importance; so that the name of Christ is lost among them; and upon the Authority of these human regulations they have made no scruple in the different Churches to condemn to death both learned and unlearned. And yet we know that nothing can be more contrary to the practice of the wisest Courts of Judicature, than the producing any such proofs of heresy against a Culprit, whilst the original Scriptures themselves are in being; for at the best they can only be looked upon as

extracts, or Copies, or interpretations, from which the Culprit has an undoubted right to appeal, as Luther always did to the original Scriptures, from whence they are said to be drawn; for the Copy, or Extract, or interpretation, ought to have no authority as long as the original itself can be produced.

There is another argument against Subscription to Articles, which grows stronger and stronger every day, as the Scriptures are better understood, than when the Articles were first made; and it is this; that the doctrines to be believed are much more intelligible in the Scripture than they are in the Articles. “Some wise men,” says Bishop Taylor, “think
“the Church had been more happy if she had
“not been constrained to alter the simplicity
“of her Faith, and make it more curious and
“articulate; so much, that he had need be a
“subtle man to understand the very words of
“the new Determinations.” (Pol. Disc.) The disciples of Christ were ignorant Fishermen, and they never mention any other doctrines than what are intelligible to the common People.

To what purpose is it then that the Articles should be subscribed? The preamble to them informs us, that it is to avoid diversity of opinions.—But does it serve this purpose? By no means. It not only divides the Churches, which ought to consider themselves throughout the world, as under one and the same head,
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and as one and the same Church; But it does not from the very time of the Subscription, keep even the members of the same Church united; no, not even the Clergy. For when a young man receives Priest's Orders he solemnly declares, "that he is determined to instruct
 " the people committed to his charge, and to
 " teach nothing as required of necessity to Sal-
 " vation, but that which he shall be persuaded
 " may be concluded and proved by Scripture,
 " and to drive away all strange and erroneous
 " doctrines contrary to God's word." And can it be imagined that a subscription to the Articles frustrates this declaration, and precludes him from the use of his application to the Study of the Scripture all his life after? Is he to grow no wiser? Is he never to understand the Scriptures better than those who formed the Articles? Or is he to keep his knowledge to himself, and preach what he knows to be false? Whatever a man believes when he subscribes, it can no longer bind him than till he sees reason to change his mind. And therefore as to any uniformity of Doctrine by a Subscription, it is all a fancy. When he sees that the Scripture contradicts the Articles, every good man will contradict them too; and not defend a falsity merely because he has once subscribed it; and continue to declare, the *Lord hath said*, after he knows the Lord hath not said it. There was as much Uniformity of opinion in the Church
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when there was no Subscription to Articles, as there is now. Every man preaches what he thinks is agreeable to Scripture, and he so far does his duty. But the Uniformity at present, as far as it goes, consists in preaching contrary to the Articles; for those who observe them are looked upon to be Methodists.

Those who objected to the Clerical Petition were sensible of this, and therefore observe, that *neither the truth* nor the *Importance* of the Articles are concerned in the debate.—My argument relates chiefly to the Rulers of the Church, who cannot conscientiously require a Subscription to what is false, or what is of no importance. And therefore it is very much to my purpose to consider both; and especially to remember, that so far as a Christian Church receives and establishes articles of Faith contrary to the doctrines of Christ, so far it becomes Apostate, (see p. 93.). And so far as it establishes false doctrines, knowing them to be such, so far it ceases to be a Christian Church. If these things be true, surely the Imposition of Articles is a Thing not to be trifled with. For whoever shall study the subject to any purpose, will find, that the Subscription is not to be defended even in the important article of Truth. I shall only instance in regard to the three Creeds. That which is commonly called the Apostles Creed, was *not composed* by the *Apostles*; nor ap-

appeared complete till the middle of the Fourth Century. What is imposed upon the Subscribers as the *Nicene Creed*, is *not* the *Nicene Creed*. And that which is called the Creed of St. *Athanasius*, is not the Creed of St. Athanasius; nay more, it is contrary to the Faith of St. Athanasius, and its doctrine is condemned by him. Again, let us consider the doctrines subscribed.

1. That there is only *One* divine Substance to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is established by the Council of Lateran, and received into the Church of England, in her second and fifth Articles, and the proper Preface to the Communion service for Trinity Sunday.

2. That there are *Three* divine Substances joined together *inseparably*, is the sense of the *Nicene Creed*, as explained by the learned.

3. That there are *Three Separate* divine Substances of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each of which is of *Himself* both *God* and *Lord*, is the doctrine of the Athanasian Creed (*a*). Now how can our Rulers, with any regard to the Truth of Christianity, require a Subscription to such plane contradictions? If they know not on which side the truth lies, why is not the question suffered to rest till they do? It requires

(*a*) See Ben. Mord. Lett. VIII. p. 34.

no great knowledge to be assured, that they cannot all of them be true.

Can a Subscription to these Contradictions produce a Conformity in opinions? Or, will not men of contrary opinions defend them, as South and Sherlock did, by appealing to the same Articles? Again,

What has the Church gained by requiring a Subscription to the Calvinistical Articles; has it secured the Calvinistical Faith? By no means. Arminianism broke forth on a sudden, and overbore the whole Calvinistical system. Archbishop Laud, Bishop Bull, and others, as Bishop Hoadly observes, departed manifestly from the received Sense, not of one, but of several Articles: and the declaration of King James I. as I observed, openly patronised the Subscribing the *same Articles* in *several* not only different but *contradictory* Senses; and in effect, declared for the Honour of the *Articles*, that *this* should be so, and that all should acquiesce in it without mutual reproaches(*b*). What then becomes of that Uniformity of Opinion which the title to the Articles seems to require? Agreeable to this Declaration, a learned Bishop of the Church hath taken no small pains to prove them capable both of an Arminian and Calvinistical sense. If they *are* so, of what use is a Subscription towards preventing a diversity of

(*b*) Hoadly, Vol. II. p. 910.

opinions? If they are not so, with what Conscience can our Governors require a Subscription to Calvinistical Articles which they do not believe? If they are doubtful, of what use can it be to subscribe to what is uncertain and indeterminate? To what end then can it serve, but to divide the Churches and raise scruples in the mind of many honest men, and prevent them from entering into the Church; for all men are not so courageous as the late Bishop of Gloucester was, who, if I mistake not, was writing against one of the Articles, at the same time that he was defending a Subscription to them all.

Divine Legat. Vol. II. 446.

Future rewards and Punishments were not only not the Sanction of the Mosaick dispensation; but were not taught in it at all, and in consequence of this omission, the people had not this doctrine for many ages.

VIIth Art. of the Church.

Both in the Old and New Testament everlasting Life is offered to mankind by Christ; and they are not to be heard which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory Promises.

Others there are of a more tender conscience, and more fearful of the very appearance of prevarication, who are obliged, at a time when they have just fitted themselves for the ministry,

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to give up all their hopes in that way of life, merely because they believe as their Examiners, the bulk of the people, and the two Houses of Parliament believe, and imagine the Articles are contrary to that sense, and incapable of it without violence in the interpretation. The more tender their consciences are, and the more fearful they are of doing wrong by subscribing to what they are not sure of, or greatly suspect; the more assuredly they are kept out of the Church; whilst men of the vilest principles, who can subscribe to any thing, and believe nothing, find no difficulty to gain admission. For how strange soever it may seem, as things are now circumstanced, the Governors of the Church are obliged to require a Subscription to what none of them would venture to defend for fear of being looked upon as Methodists: And they refuse many worthy and good men, not because they differ in their Sentiments, but because they agree. And yet there are some who chuse to continue in these Shackles; *vident meliora probantque, deteriora sequuntur.*

There are others, who after struggling with their scruples for some time, have at length found it the only way of making their minds easy, to give up their preferment, and enter into another course of life. Many there are who have been drawn in by the example of great and good men, and afterwards thought
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the reasons they went upon unsatisfactory. Some of which have at first considered them only as Articles of Peace. The learned and ingenious Dr. Balguy observes a great difference and distinction between terms of *Salvation*, and terms of *admission* to the *Ministry*, and quotes the following words from Dr. Samuel Clark's Reply to Nelson, p. 32. That particular Churches require man's assent and use of certain forms of words, not as a *Rule* of their Faith, but as *prudential means* of uniformity, and of preventing disorder and Confusion among themselves. (Dr. Balguy's Charge.)

To which others reply, that they are not able to see things in that light; that the requisition cannot mean, that the articles should be considered as Terms of *admission* to the ministry, because it extends to such as are not *designed* for the ministry; and that it cannot relate to a Subscription as to Articles of *Peace*, or *prudential Means* of Uniformity, because the Preamble to the Articles declares the Subscription is meant to *prevent diversity of Opinions*, and therefore relates to the actual belief of *all* the Articles. Others have argued for a Subscription from the nature of publick worship, and the necessity of imperfection in every Liturgy that can be composed by men; from whence it follows, that these imperfections must be connived at, or there could be no publick worship at all. And this is very true; but does not reach the case; because we do not subscribe that this faulty Liturgy is

without fault, but only to the use of it, with all its imperfections; which makes a very important difference. Thus by the requiring Subscription to Articles, the Church of England is deprived of the most conscientious of its members from entering into the Ministry: But this is an Evil which our Rulers perhaps may not feel, or not attend to.

In other Protestant Countries the Subscription to human Compositions is much more severe, as we find in Buan Herport's Essay on Truths of Importance, p. 178. in which, considering the Church matters at Bern, where he was imprisoned and died, he says, " At first the *Loci communes* of the learned and moderate Melancton, were recommended as a very good book; but soon all Candidates for holy Orders were to subscribe to it as a complete doctrine. Dissentions increasing [instead of referring to the Scripture, and arguing, that if they are not there plainly determined, they might safely be left undetermined] the Synod of *Lichtenburg*, in 1576, determined, that besides the three Creeds, the *Augsberg* Confession, its defence, *Luther's* two Catechisms, and the *Smalcald* Articles should be received as Rules. The Concordance book, composed by Dr. Schmiddi, was likewise established as a Rule to be indispensibly sworn to. Some Country Ministers asking how this could be done with a safe Conscience, having previously sworn to

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Melanchton's Loci Communes, which in many places disagreed with the Concordance, Schmid-di made answer, ' that the Assembly now absolved them, ipso facto, from obligation of any former Oath, and that Melanchton being under suspicion, they must rest satisfied and swear again.' A poor village Parson took the liberty to reply, Conscience should not be laid under any restraint; but we poor people having Families to maintain, must take care not to be turned out of our Livings."

By this we see how one mischief brings on another. Whence had the Protestants this dispensing Power? One would imagine such a question would have startled them, and brought them to consider what Right they had to require such Oaths. If they had consulted the first Principle of Protestantism, they must have seen their Error, and avoided the whole difficulty; for, " The Restraining the Ministers to
 " preach according to the sense and interpreta-
 " tion of Scripture *approved by the Church*, is
 " one of the Articles of the Edict of Spire, in
 " 1529, which was protested against by the fa-
 " vourers of the Reformation, and from which
 " they first obtained the name of Protestants
 " (c)." Which plainly proved, that this assumed Authority is a relick of Popery.

But he who once hath missed the right way,
 The farther he doth go, the farther he doth stray.

(c) See Archdeacon Blackbourne's Discourses, p. 167.

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This account which Mr. Herport gives us, describes very naturally the tendency of the reformed Churches to the Principles of Popery. They first recommended a book to the Clergy, then required a Subscription to it; and then, as their Confidence encreased, an Oath to another Book, and from thence proceeded to imprison their members for disobeying such decrees, &c. p. 103. And thus the Protestants in this Country were led on by degrees to the convincing argument of Fire and Faggot, merely by not attending to the first question, whether they had any Right to punish men for spreading their Religious Opinions in a peaceable manner. And we shall never be safe from the practice of Persecution till we renounce the principles upon which it is founded, and has been lately defended under the notion of punishing Heresy and silencing sectaries. And if the Rulers of the Protestant Churches would reflect upon the Consequence of such a Conduct, they would find that the temporal interest of the Petitioners against a Subscription to Articles is by no means so much concerned in the question, as the Rulers are in getting rid of the danger they themselves incur by imposing them, whether they consider themselves as Protestants or Christians. For, let them lay their hands upon their hearts and reflect upon what they are doing? Do they not as far as in them lies encourage the Apostacy, by substituting the
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ordinances and fallible interpretations of men (into which they themselves perhaps have never so much as examined, and perhaps are not capable of examining) instead of the word of God? Do they not stop the progress of the Truth, and prevent Christianity from being better understood, than when the Articles were first composed, and thereby, as much as in them lies, deprive the people of all the light that has appeared in the writings of wise men for the last Century, and establish all the errors of former ages, all the contradictions which prevent Christianity from being defended in a consistent manner, all the mistakes of the Calvinistical System which prevail in so many Protestant Churches, and which represent Almighty God as an arbitrary Being, whose ways are unequal, determining men to eternal punishment before they existed, and condemning them for Sins committed before they were born, with many other mistakes of a very bad tendency (*d*)? Are these fit doctrines to be subscribed

(*d*) I cannot forbear to say, and I care not if all the world heard me, for I speak nothing but what is worthy of God and to the honour of my Maker [these are the words of the very learned and judicious Bishop Ruft] I can with more ease think that light should spring out of the bottomless pit, that the sun should become the Source of darkness, that ice should burn, and fire freeze, that the elements should interchange their natures and contradictory terms be reconciled to one another, than that God should

scribed to? Will they promote the belief of Christianity? Will they increase our Love to God? Will they stand the scoff of Unbelievers? And if it be said, the common people are no judges of such things, is it not so much the worse in their Rulers to deceive them? For what is done by the Articles, &c. is done by those who impose them by their Authority, and they are answerable to God for the truth of every thing they order to be subscribed as a matter of Faith. They presumptuously alter the words of Scripture, or impose them when altered, and thereby take the doctrine upon themselves. Mr. Wentworth's answer to the Archbishop of Canterbury, when these subjects were considered in Queen Elisabeth's time, proves plainly that he and those who were in the commission with him understood it so. No! by the faith of God, says he, *We* will pass nothing till *we* understand what it is (*d*).” And would they have sacrificed Truth to Politicks, and passed any thing which they did not believe? Or, with the light the Christians now

should *take up a thought* of making any of his creatures miserable without the consideration of their provocation and continuance in it. And so fully hath God by natural and revealed light instructed my mind in this Truth, that if an Angel from heaven should preach any other Doctrine, it were impossible I should believe him. Bp. Rust's Remains, p. 12.

(*d*) Life of Chillingworth.

have,

have, would they have thought of recommending, much less of requiring a Subscription to such doctrines? In short, it appears so contrary to the progress of Christianity, to its perfection; that it falls little if at all short of the crime with which the Governors of the Church are accused by Isaiah; "This is a rebellious People, lying Children; Children that will not hear the law of the Lord, which *say to the Seers, see not, and to the Prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, Prophecy deceits.*" Is. xxx. 10.

The learned Dr. Balguy very justly observes, that it cannot but introduce doubts and perplexity in the minds of people, when they hear in the same town, perhaps in the same Church, the most irreconcilable contradictions of doctrine; when they are told in the morning, suppose, that Christ came down from heaven, &c. and in the afternoon, that he did *not* come down from heaven, &c. what *must* they, what *can* they think?

But whatever they may think they cannot be more perplexed, than when they read in the Scripture that Christ came down from heaven, and are told by their most eminent Divines, such as South, Sherlock, Bull, More, Fowler, &c. that it could not be (*r*). And whence does

(*r*) See Ben. Mord. Lett. III. Postscript.

this difference arise, but from constituting a Rule of Faith in Creeds and Articles of human invention, different and contrary to what we find in holy writ, which is, or ought to be, the only rule of Protestants. And how can it be prevented, except by adhering to Scripture as the Rule of Faith, and admitting no other? Most certainly not by a subscription to the articles of the Church; for the very men who maintain these doctrines, which contradict the Scripture, were themselves subscribers to the Articles. And in fact, it is by establishing for gospel truths such contradictory opinions, as articles of faith, which have been framed at different times by Christians of opposite principles, that the Church has become so corrupted in some material doctrines, that its most learned and ingenious members have not been able to defend her Creeds without contradicting the New Testament: I mean particularly in those articles which relate to the descent of Christ from heaven, his sufferings and his death. We are told by Bp. Bull, that Christ descended only in ENERGY; and by Dr. Waterland, that he emptied himself of his glory only in APPEARANCE; and by Epiphanius, that the Sufferings of Christ were only RECKONED to him. I confess I have it at heart, and I think I cannot inculcate it too strongly, or too often, that whatever doctrine does directly or indirectly, explicitly or in its consequence require us to be-

believe, that Christ did not descend from heaven, suffer, and die, is no doctrine of Christ. And I lay this dilemma again (✓) before all Christians who are desirous of receiving the truth on so important a subject.—If Christ is of the same Substance with the Father, (who is infinite and impassible, as all Christians allow,) then he could not descend from heaven, and suffer and die: and all interpretation of Scripture to that purpose must be false. Or on the other hand; if Christ was *παθης*, capable of suffering, as he is declared to be by St. Paul and all the Prophets (Acts xxvi. 23.); if he did actually descend from heaven, and suffer and die, then he is not of the same infinite and impassible substance as the Father, and all that is said to the contrary in any of the Creeds is false. The question therefore is in its consequence of the utmost importance to all such as have any regard to the honour of the church, and would wish that the whole tenor of her Articles and Creeds should be consistent with Scripture.

I am far from wishing that our Governors would enter into these or such like questions; it is a great happiness that they do not. But a time may come, that such questions may again become the tests of heresy, and the pretext to persecution: I can only wish, that while Power

(✓) See Ben. Mord. Lett. VIII.

continues in the hands of truly liberal and sensible Christians, that they would so far provide for the peace and liberty of the Subject, that an honest man may believe as his conscience directs him upon such Subjects, or not think of them at all, without any danger to his person or property. For Persecution is a more dangerous heresy than the five hundred mentioned by Prateolus, taken all together.

It has been by these human laws controuling our Faith under penalties, that the man of Sin, in carrying on the apostacy from the word of God, has found himself assisted by the most pious, learned, and respectable among the modern Divines, such as Dr. South, Sherlock, Fowler, Bull, Pearson, Waterland, &c. as he was formerly assisted in maintaining the worship of the dead, and the doctrine of many Mediators, by Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Athanasius, Basil, &c. and the Writers of the present age who endeavour to maintain the Credit of the Fathers, in opposition to the plain doctrines of Scripture, only expose themselves to the same unfurmountable difficulties.

This being the Case, one might naturally enough have imagined, that it would have been looked upon by the Church, and particularly by the Clergy, as a praiseworthy attempt to clear its defenders from such embarrassments, by appealing from Councils and Creeds, and
 Arti-

Articles of human Composition to the Scripture; and thereby enabling both Clergy and Laity to give a Reason of the faith that is in them without the imputation of heresy, or of acting a double part in defending contradictions.

And one might have hoped that the Clerical Petition, tending to deliver us from such Chains, might, amongst Protestants who allow of no Authority in matters of Faith but Scripture, have been highly approved of.

But the fate of the Clerical Petition has been very different; and it is amazing with what heat and violence its opposers have expressed themselves upon the Subject, intimating that the Petitioners had dark and dangerous designs in view, both against Church and State.—But it is the nature of Error, that such, as are involved in it most deeply, look upon those as their greatest enemies, who would deliver them from it: and the greatest affront that can be offered to their Understanding is to discover the nakedness of those human Systems to which they have solemnly subscribed; for they had rather always continue in their mistakes than once own they had been guilty of an Error. Am I therefore become your Enemy because I tell you the truth? says St. Paul to the Galatians, iv. 6. most certainly he was, though they might be ashamed to confess it openly.

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One learned Writer argues as follows : “ That those who understand the nature of the Petition will readily agree with him, that the question between them amounts only to this ; whether it is fit for Government to employ and reward equally the Ministers of all Religions, or to support one Religion and tolerate the Rest ? Or, whether Jupiter and Mahomet ought to have public honours assigned to them even in a Christian country, on a principle of common equity, and out of a tender regard to the Right of private judgment ? And again, the Question is, Are we to have any establishment or none ? ” But this is a very partial, and a very false representation of the question between us. This learned writer seems to forget, that the Petitioners were ready to subscribe to the Scripture and to use the Liturgy as now established, and to conform in every other particular except a Subscription to the Articles. And, can it be imagined that a Subscription to Articles supposed to be taken from Scripture, is more necessary to the nature of an establishment, than a subscription to the Scripture itself ? Or is it true, that a Pagan or Mahometan would conform to such Requisitions ?

The same ingenious Writer makes it another question, Whether the Petition arose from a dislike of all establishments, or from a desire
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of erecting a new establishment on the ruins of the present one ? But is there no third reason to be thought of ? Is it possible that a Man who has ever heard of the Reformation, should never recollect, that it might possibly arise from a desire that the established Church might reform its Errors, and become as consistent as possible to the doctrines of the New Testament ? Had the Reformers a dislike of all Religions, or did they desire to erect a new Religion upon the ruins of the old one ? Most certainly neither the one nor the other ; but they preferred the doctrines of the Gospel, to that of the Establishment. And as the Petitioners know their Church to be perfect in its fundamental Article, viz. the Sufficiency of Scripture as a Rule of Faith, they were desirous that no alloy should be mixed with the pure gold, that might debase its intrinsic worth.

But as this Writer has appealed to Bishop Hoadly, let us do the same ; for we shall not find a firmer friend to Christianity nor to the present Establishment in Church and State, nor a better judge of the duty which belongs to each. “ We esteem our Constitution either in Church or State better than others, says his Lordship, because we suppose there are fewer Errors in it. But shall we think it therefore perfect ? No, certainly, nor endeavour to make others think so. I know better what a
true

true affection to the Church of England imports, than to make it consist in thinking it given down immediately from heaven, pure and blameless, without spot or wrinkle: and I know, I hope, my duty to God and to Christ better than to *prostitute* the honour of the Gospel to that of any Constitution in the world (*u*).” But, before I consider Bishop Hoadly’s opinion, I shall quote the following words of Bishop Burnet, which equally favour the Petitioners.

“ My thoughts,” says Bishop Burnet, “ have
 “ run most and dwelt longest on the concerns
 “ of the Church and Religion. I have always
 “ had a true zele for the Church of England; I
 “ have lived in its Communion with joy, and have
 “ pursued its true interests with an unfeigned
 “ affection. Yet I must say, there are many
 “ things in it that have been very uneasy to me.
 “ The requiring subscription to the Thirty-nine
 “ Articles is a great IMPOSITION (*x*). I be-
 “ lieve

(*u*) Hoadly, Vol. II. p. 762.

(*x*) A Learned Writer against the Clerical Petition, takes notice, that the Phrase of IMPOSING Articles is a strange way of speaking, much in use among Writers of a *certain Class*: and it is very true that Writers of the same Class with Bishop Burnet and Bishop Hoadly make no scruple to use it. Notwithstanding which, it is very certain, as some of their charitable Brethren have observed, that a Subscription is *imposed* upon no man. Since every one, after spending his little patrimony at College to fit him for the Church, has an undoubted Right, if he
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“ lieve them all myself,” says his Lordship,
 “ but as those about Original Sin and Pre-
 “ destination might be expressed more unex-
 “ ceptionably; so I think it is a better way to
 “ let such matters continue to be the standard
 “ of doctrine with some few corrections; and
 “ to censure those who teach any contrary
 “ tenets, than to oblige all who serve in the
 “ Church to *subscribe* them. Churches and Socie-
 “ ties are much better secured by Laws than by
 “ subscription. It is a more easy, as well as a
 “ more reasonable method of Government. Our
 “ worship is the perfectest method of devotion
 “ that we find in any Church, ancient or mo-
 “ dern; yet the Corrections that were agreed to
 “ by a deputation of Bishops and Divines, in
 “ the year 1689, would make the whole frame
 “ of our Liturgy still more perfect as well as
 “ more unexceptionable; and will, I hope, some
 “ time or other be better entertained than they
 “ were then. I am persuaded that they are
 “ such as would bring in the greatest part of
 “ the dissenters to the communion of the Church;
 “ and are in themselves desirable, though there
 “ were not a dissenter in the nation.” Hist. of
 his own Times, p. 634.

is notable conscientiously to subscribe, either to enter into
 the army, or navy, or become an itinerant Pedlar, and im-
 prove himself in the Knowledge of the world by travel,
 as Ulysses did, ὅς μάλ᾽ ἀπολλὰ—πλαγχθῆ—δ' ἀνδρῶπων εἶδεν ἄστεα
 καὶ ἴσον ἔγνω.

Here we see, that Bishop Burnet not only wholly approves of the principles of the Clerical Petition against Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, but looks upon the requisition of Subscription to them as a great *imposition*, and an unnecessary one; forasmuch as the good proposed by it would be better served and better secured by laws than by a Subscription. The Bishop goes much further than the Petitioners have offered to go: He tells us planely and honestly, that the Articles in some things are exceptionable, and stand in need of Correction; and that the Liturgy is capable of amendment, and wishes them to be corrected and improved, by the agreement of 1689; and all this he considers as consistent with zeale for the Church, and pursuit of its true interests. And why should not the Petitioners be thought to act upon the same reasons as the Bishops of Salisbury and Winchester?

The words that are quoted against the Petition, from Bishop Hoadly's works, are as follow:

“ To propose the Amendment of some particulars in the present Establishment,” says his Lordship, “ in order to the making it more perfect, is what cannot well be complained of—but to propose a scheme which cannot be admitted without entire destruction and total abolition of the whole present Constitution, can end in no good.”

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Now in the first clause of this paragraph the Petitioners are not at all concerned; they have proposed no amendments, though if they had proposed any, *in order to make the Establishment more perfect*, they are hereby warranted by Bishop Hoadly, as before by Bishop Burnet.— And with regard to the latter Clause, (that *to propose a scheme which cannot be admitted without the entire destruction of the whole constitution, can end in no good*) the Petitioners are entirely of the same opinion, and have never thought of proposing such a pernicious scheme.

But perhaps it was the Objector's belief, that Bishop Hoadly imagined the very proposal to *take away Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles*, was *itself* a scheme of this *pernicious nature*; if this was his opinion, he was entirely mistaken: Bishop Hoadly knew the contrary; he knew that Churches can, and have existed, and we know that they do now exist without Subscription. But hear his own words in the Postscript to the answer to Bishop Hare's Sermon, Vol. II. folio, p. 905.

“ The proposal which the Bishop [Potter] so much condemns, has chiefly an eye to Lay communion; so, supposing it to extend to the Clergy and REQUIRE NO SUBSCRIPTION of them, but to the SCRIPTURE as the word of God, in which the Rule of Faith is contained. Supposing this to be the case in the

present Church of England, in that happy State in which it is at this time ; yet this would not hinder but the Bishops, as the Officers vested with the ordinary power of appointing or ordaining ministers under themselves, would still be judges of the qualifications of these Persons, of their morals, their temper, and the competent learning and sense, necessary for their several offices : neither could any be admitted as Clergy in this particular Church, but such as are approved and admitted by the Bishops themselves, any more than any persons can be admitted to the Ministry in any other particular Church, without the previous examination and approbation of *those* who are allowed *in that Church* to judge of their qualifications. So that I do not see that great Confusion from this Scheme. Nay, it appears to me as consistent with a Liturgy and an Episcopacy as any Scheme whatever, that does not engage or allow us to deny others a privilege of uniting with other forms of Churches according to their own Consciences, and the best judgment they frame for their own Church."

Here we see beyond dispute, that the Clerical Petition is supported by the judgment of these two great men, who were firm friends to the Civil and Ecclesiastical Establishment of these Kingdoms ; and if this should be the method of examining the Clergy for Orders, and

and requiring a Subscription to Scripture only, the Church would at least find this great benefit in it, that all the improvement which has been made in the study of the Scriptures, would be transferred into it, and the Clergy would not be obliged to maintain the old errors, knowing them to be such. I might here direct the Reader to other places in Bishop Hoadly's writings in defence of the right of private judgment, and the free use of Scripture; for almost all the arguments against the Petitioners are founded on principles which lead to Popery. Let him consult his Rights of Subjects, sect. v. vi. xi. His answer to the Committee, sect. xx. And Mr. Chillingworth's Religion of Protestants, ch. ii. sect. 12. 104. 114. 150, 151, 152. ch. iii. sect. 88. ch. vi. sect. 56. 66. ch. iv. 1. 6. and the last paragraph of the preface.

If it was not so long, I would quote the sarcastick advice which Bishop Hoadly puts into the mouths of his adversaries; as it is, shall only copy the latter part of it, which suits the Enemies to the Petition very exactly.

“ But, *my brethren*, let not the appearances of
 “ these, or any other seeming inconsistencies,
 “ stand in your way. Acknowledge the *Pro-*
 “ *testant principles* for *Decency* sake; but stead-
 “ fastly adhere to the *Popish*. Let the Scripture
 “ be in *words* the ONLY Guide, and a SAFE
 “ Guide, but in *deed* and *truth*, let the Custom
 “ of

“ of the Church, in the framing TESTS, or the
 “ *judgment* and *Practice* of it, very long after the
 “ Scripture was written, be your Guide. And
 “ then ONLY you may be sure of EXCLUD-
 “ ING those whom you call Hereticks, and
 “ having a *Glorious Church*, within as *narrow*
 “ *bounds*, as the heart of man, made *narrow*,
 “ either by *zele*, *avarice*, or *ambition* can wish
 “ to see it (e).”

In short, if the Scripture will serve to form Articles *from*, they must serve as a proper Rule to the Ministers to preach from, as the Church requires them to do. Mr. Chillingworth says,
 “ I, for my part, after a long, and I verily believe, an Impartial search after the true way to happiness, do profess planely, that I cannot find any rest to the sole of my foot but this rock only, and that the BIBLE is the Religion of Protestants.”

But the Writers against the Petitioners declare, agreeable to other Popish Principles, that a Subscription to the Scripture is absolutely NOTHING, and consistent with every imaginary absurdity and mischief: This may be thought a very extraordinary assertion to come from a Protestant: But it fully agrees with what we find in the writings of Bp. Hare and others of *that Class*. Bp. Hare asserts, that to leave every man to make the best of his Bible without

(e) Answer to Hare's Sermon, Vol. II. p. 916.

any farther direction or RESTRAINT, would NATURALLY tend to confusion, and fill the Kingdom with all the wild Conceits, that Ignorance and Enthusiasm could produce." Bp. Hoadly has fully answered this in his Common Rights of Subjects, sect. VI. page 732, &c. to which I refer the Reader, only quoting this one Sentence of his Answer, from page 736. " But
 " that these wild Conceits *naturally* arise from
 " every Christian's being left to make the best
 " use of his Bible, (which I am sorry to have
 " ever heard from so considerable and celebrated
 " a Writer) let him who has said it prove it,
 " to the Confusion of all Protestant arguments,
 " to the joy of every good Catholick, and to
 " the *shame* of the *Protestant* cause, and of all
 " that was ever yet called by the *name* of *Refor-*
 " *mation.*"

However if it be the Case, it must arise either from ignorance or dishonesty. Is it that the Scripture is capable of so many *different* Senses, that the true Sense *cannot* be *ascertain'd*? How then can *certain* Articles be framed from it for our belief? Even then, it is a Subscription to something, viz. that the Scripture is true, or that it is the word of God. Or does the Writer mean, that men may from thence find plausible texts to defend their *mistakes*? This can by no means be universally prevented, unless all men were infallible. But may not the *Articles* be also *misunderstood*, and every other human Composition?

tion? Even then it will be a Subscription to the divinity of the Scriptures, which is the only direction to truth, that God has vouchsafed to us. Or perhaps it may arise from *dishonesty*; and the Author means, that men find in Scripture plausible texts to defend their wilful errors, and there is no doubt but ingenious men, who are determined at all Events to defend an Hypothesis which they know to be false, will be able by false representation to deceive other men, and sometimes themselves. Men whose consciences will suffer them to write in opposition to known truth, &c. and are *αυτοκατακριτοι*, self-condemned in the very act, will suck poison out of the most wholesome food, and wrest both Scripture and Articles to their own destruction. But is Subscription nothing upon this account? It is just the same as a Subscription to any bargain or agreement, which they are resolved not to stand to: and their Subscription to articles, is as useless as a Subscription to Scripture. Lastly, if an *honest* Subscription to the *true* sense of Scripture be full of mischief and absurdity; the fault must lie in the book itself, and it will not be a subscription to nothing, but a subscription to an *absurd* and *mischievous* Book; and what can be expected then, but *absurd* and *mischievous* Articles to be taken out of it?—And if the Scripture is such a Nose of Wax, as Buan Herport and others tell us it is considered by
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some people, so that it may be twisted any way, and the Subscribers can turn and wind it to their purposes with a safe conscience. It follows unavoidably, that the *Articles* themselves must be of the *same* nature; or else they are not *fairly* and *bonestly* taken from the Scripture. For whatever is in the Article *more determinate* than it is in *Scripture*, cannot be proved from Scripture, and consequently stands upon an usurped authority.

But it may be said, how else can we prevent Diversity of Opinions? I answer first, that a Subscription will not do it; and secondly, that we have no right to do it. If that right had existed in the Jewish Church or nation, Christ and his Apostles were to blame; If in the Romish Church, the Reformers were to blame. Every man of sense must know, that the attempt must, in every Science and Art whatever, be the bane to all improvement, and to the investigation of Truth.

But if the Churches will not be persuaded but that a diversity of opinions ought to be prevented, and that it will be more compleatly done by a Subscription to Articles of human Composition than by a Subscription to *Scripture* itself; there arises another difficulty, viz. who shall hold down this Proteus so full of all imaginary mischief and absurdity, to one certain and *determinate* sense; especially if they measure

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by two different Rules of Faith? Quo teneat Vultum mutantem Protea nodo? Shall we trust it to the Clergy? What says Mr. Wentworth upon this subject? “ When I was sent among
 “ others,” says Mr. Wentworth, “ the last Par-
 “ liament in 1575, unto the Bishop of Canter-
 “ bury, for the Articles of Religion then past
 “ this house, he asked me why we did put out
 “ of the book the Article for the homilies, &c.
 “ Surely, Sir, said I, because we were so occu-
 “ pied in other matters, that we had no time to
 “ examine them, how they agreed with the
 “ word of God. What! said he, surely you
 “ mistook the matter, you will refer yourselves
 “ wholly to us therein. No! by the faith I
 “ bear to God, said I, we will pass nothing be-
 “ fore we understand what it is; for that were
 “ to make you Popes. Make you Popes who
 “ list, said I, for we will make you none(*f*).”
 Shall it then be trusted to the Laity? No surely;
 this, by the same argument, would be to make
 Popes of *themselves*. Shall it be trusted to both
 Clergy and Laity, or Parliament and Convoca-
 tion, as it was formerly trusted to the general
 Councils under the Emperors? Be it so; but
 then it must be remembered, that these Legis-
 lative assemblies can have no greater powers
 than their Constituents have a right to give

(*f*) D'Ewe's Journal, 239, 240.

them;

them; and no man has a right to give up his religious principles to his Representative, and settle his faith by Proxy; and consequently neither Laity nor Clergy can receive any such power from their constituents, nor move a step farther in requiring a Subscription to their articles than the words of Scripture will allow, as our present Articles declare, viz. that General Councils [which consisted both of Clergy and Laity] have erred, and nothing is to be required of any man as an Article of Faith but what is read therein, or may be proved from Scripture. Art. VI. XXI.—And the Protestants are extremely severe upon the Romanists for exerting any farther authority. And thus they argue.

“ So conscious are the Roman Prelates of the
 “ *gross absurdity* and *apparent Folly* of their own
 “ doctrine, and the plain contradictions that it
 “ bears in many *Articles* to the Scriptures, and
 “ the clearest Reason; that they *dare not* permit
 “ the meanest members of their Church to look
 “ into the Scriptures, or make inquiry, or
 “ search into the *Articles* of their Faith; or
 “ trust a Child of twelve years old without an
 “ Oath to bind him firm to their Superstition.
 “ And therefore it has been decreed by many of
 “ their Councils, that all males of fourteen, and
 “ females of twelve years of age, shall abjure all
 “ Heresy extolling itself against the holy Catho-
 “ lic Church and Orthodox Faith, and shall

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“ swear

“ swear also that they will hold the Catholic
 “ Faith, which the Roman Church teacheth and
 “ holdeth. And this Oath, by the decrees of
 “ Thouloufe and Alby, is to be renew’d upon
 “ them every two years.—And again. Surely
 “ such unworthy arts do give just reason to all
 “ considering Persons, to suspect the truth of
 “ that Religion which needeth thus to be sup-
 “ ported by Oaths and Abjurations made by
 “ children.” See a discourse already quoted at
 page 47.

But do not the Protestants condemn *themselves*
 in this respect, when they require a subscription
 to the XXXIX Articles from such as cannot be
 supposed to understand them, and thereby make
 the first breach into that honesty and Simplicity
 of Heart for which young minds are remark-
 able; and a way to farther Deviations from
 virtue. And yet are not the Children of our no-
 bility and gentry subjected to this snare? And
 can any honest man wish to see the growing
 generation entangling their Consciences at the
 beginning of Life by such insidious Trials?

It may be said, as it has been with regard to
 the Clergy, that this subscription is not *imposed*
 upon any one, as there is no *necessity* for them to
 receive Academical honours, or take degrees in
 any Science: and it is true; but why should
 they be debarred of them? to say nothing to
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the question why one employ should differ from another in this respect. The mischief is not that they scruple this subscription, but that from example, or some other reasons, they make no objections to it; but consider it as a mere matter of form, and sign their names without inquiring whether what they subscribe to, be true or false. Thus we see that both Clergy and Laity join together to lay a stumbling block in the way of Posterity to all succeeding generations.

And by what right? Every honest man must know, that he has no greater right to require of other men a Subscription to articles of Faith of human composition, than they have to require it of him. And it is this very Subscription which causes so many sects and scisms in the Church. This I have proved to be the case upon introducing the Homousian Doctrine; and it must naturally be the same upon all other Doctrines imposed by Authority.

While the Christians were contented with the words of Scripture, that Christ was of, or from God, *ex Θεῷ*, there was no division upon the question: when they would define Heresy more strictly, and added to this, by way of explanation, that he was *ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Θεοῦ*, of or from the *Substance* of God, they divided into sects, and murdered one another. When they went on to a farther explanation of the words, they subdivided;

divided; and this will always be the Case upon the imposition of disputed comments upon uncertain texts.

Lastly, of what small effect can the Subscription to XXXIX Articles be, to the purifying of the Church, when the Heresies recorded by Praetolus are above 500, which leaves 461 not provided against, to which we are not prevented from adding as many more as we can invent: whereas there is not one of the remaining 461, and the new invented ones, but what will be much better provided against by a Subscription to Scripture, which every Subscriber is supposed both by the Church and State to understand.

In short, the whole Chance the people of this Country can reasonably indulge that they shall be taught the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is this; that the Clergy will remember the promise made before the Bishop for Priests orders, and pay no regard to their Subscription to such doctrines as appear to them to be erroneous. But as this regard to Scripture will not defend the Clergy from a prosecution for preaching the Truth, contrary to the Articles; so neither would the resolution of the Clergy, in suffering for the cause, be any excuse to our Governors in doing what they could to prevent it.

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From what has been here said it appears, that though the Laws require Submission to General Councils as a Rule of Faith, with authority to determine what is Herefy; yet the Church declares the contrary, viz. that there is no such Authority but Scripture: And according to what every Minister shall judge to be the sense of Scripture, he is by the Bishop directed to preach. Whatever therefore might formerly be the Opinion of Bishops upon many of the present Articles, perhaps they would not now think any one the less qualified to instruct the people in the Christian Religion who should disbelieve some of them in their plain and obvious sense. But it is of very little signification what are the real opinions of the Bishops, as long as there continues to be a set of Articles to be subscribed which they have no power to alter; but every thing gives way to the Articles, without any examination whether they be true or false; which was not the case when they were first drawn up: They then imagined them to be true; but did not consider, that as the Roman Articles were the cause of our separation from Rome; so they must in time produce Dissentions among ourselves, and be the ruin of that Church which they were intended to support, if not timely prevented, by an abrogation; for to maintain them as they are, will be utterly impracticable.

If

If it be asked then: Why do not the Bishops put an end to the Subscription? The answer is, that it is not in their power. But why then do they not apply to Parliament? What reason they may have, I know not; but it may be truly said, that the interposition of the Civil Power in matters of Religion is extremely dangerous: That it is very difficult to persuade a Parliament that they have no power to determine Church questions, or authority in matters of faith; that the whole system of the Christian Religion hath been already laid down by Christ, and is already unalterably fixt, and wants no amendment; and the Supreme Civil power can neither alter it, add to it, or take from it. These are the great Truths which were maintain'd by Sir I. Newton, Bp. Hoadly, Mr. Chillingworth, &c. but were so strongly opposed by men of a certain class, that they are almost obsolete: So that I should not much wonder if it should be now argued by the Hobbists, that if the Parliament hath a right to deliver the Subject from their present Shackles in matters of faith, it must have the right of framing others which they like better. But if our Rulers would recollect their own Principles as Protestants, and agree that Holy Writ is the only Rule of Faith, there would be no danger in their interposition. They might then relieve the Energies of Christianity from all its Embarrassments, without entering into any difficult questions.

questions at all, or encroaching upon the prerogative of Christ (the only Lawgiver in such matters) merely by allowing every man to make the best of his Bible, and religiously *encouraging*, instead of *restraining* the liberty of Prophecy, which every man has a natural and unalienable right to.

Having spoken thus much of the Apostacy of the Western Churches, it remains that I say something of the Greeks or Eastern Church; to shew, that the same kind of Apostacy, in founding the Rule of Faith upon the decrees of men, has been Universal, and that Christianity, as Sir I. Newton observes, hath been corrupted in all Nations.

The Faith of the Greek Church is thus expressed in the Confession of Faith, signed by their Patriarchs, Bishops, &c. as published by Laurentius Normanus. “ Furthermore it is fitting
 “ that an Orthodox Christian hold for certain
 “ and indubitable, that all the Articles of the
 “ Catholick and Orthodox Church are delivered
 “ down from our Lord Jesus Christ by the
 “ Apostles to the Church; and the General
 “ Councils have approved and explain’d them;
 “ and that he believes them as the Apostle’s
 “ commands, II. Thess. ii. 15. Therefore
 “ Brethren, stand fast, and hold the Traditions,
 “ which ye have been taught whether by [our]
 “ word or our Epistles, εἰς διὰ λόγου ἡμεῖς δι’ ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν.

A a

“ and

“ and I. Cor. xi. 2. Now I praise ye, Brethren,
 “ that ye remember in all things, and keep the
 “ Traditions as I delivered them unto you.” —

From the texts here quoted it is plain that St. Paul only speaks of the traditions or instructions which they had received from him; but the Greeks argue upon them just as the Papists do; that there are two kinds of doctrine *δυο δογματικα λογίων*; the one committed to writing, the other deliver'd down from the mouths of the apostles, more fully declared by the Councils and holy Fathers; as follows in the Confession.

“ Hence it is manifest, that the Articles of
 “ faith have their Authority and proof, partly
 “ from the holy Scriptures, partly from Ecclesi-
 “ astical Traditions, and the doctrine of Synods
 “ and the holy Fathers; and that there are two
 “ sorts of Doctrine, &c.”

Upon the same Authority of the Councils and Fathers they hold also that “ Christ suffered *only*
 “ in the *flesh*, the divinity suffered *nothing*, nor
 “ was fixed on the Cross; and yet the Divinity.
 “ was never separated either from the body or
 “ the Soul.”

προς τετρω πρέπει να κρατη διαβεβαιουν και αναμφισβητον ο ορθοδοξος
 χριστιανος, πως όλα τα αρθρα της πιστεως της καθολικης και ορθοδοξης
 εκκλησιας ειναι παραδεδομενα απο τον Κυριον ημων Ιησυν Χριστον με το
 μεσον των αποστολων τε εις την εκκλησιαν και αν οικουμενικαι συνοδοι
 τα ερμενευσαν, και τα εδοκιμασαν και να πιστευη εις αυτα καδα
 προσλασσει ο Αποστολος, &c.

απο τα οποια λογια ειναι φανερον πως τα ἄρθρα της πίστεως εχουσιν το κυρος και την δοκιμασιαν, μερος απο την αγιαν γραφην, μερος απο την εκκλησιαστικην παραδοσιν και απο την διδασκαλιαν των συνοδων και των αγιων πατερων—ηγεν πως δυο λογιω ειναι τα δογματα, &c.

It appears then, that all the Churches, both in the East and West, have been corrupted; and the genuine Faith which was built upon TRUTH, the testimony of Jesus, the Commandments of God, the Apostles and Prophets, has suffered an Apostacy from its original and divine Standard, by joining to them the Commandments of men, the Rudiments of this world, &c.

The present Orthodoxy of the Greek Church rests upon the Scripture together with the Councils and Fathers, and is a mixture of doctrines divine and humane. In the Roman Church it is purely humane: the Church, for the time being, is Judge, and can alter the doctrines as it pleases; their orthodoxy being always what the Church believes or determines at any particular time, though ever so contrary to former decrees, and yet always, as she contends, infallible. In this country the Test of Orthodoxy, or Rule of Faith, is understood by the common people to be the Bible only, according to the fundamental Principle of Protestantism and the 21st Article, viz. there is no Authority in matters of faith but holy Writ; but by the Laws of the land are added the general Councils,

and whatever may hereafter be decided by act of Parliament, with the consent of Convocation, &c.

The whole difference therefore between the Christian Churches is entirely of their own making, and is derived from articles of human composition; and if once they left these, and returned to the Original Rule of faith before these were composed, that is, *the Scripture*; their differences would all subside, together with all uncharitableness; and their names of distinction would be lost in the name of Christ, the head of all; and the whole Church together, would be Catholick, and at Unity. It is true, that to do this every Church must give up something; but *that something* is only human, and of the same nature in them all, and is the only part of their Establishments which was never worth the keeping.—And this puts me in mind of a saying of General Wurts, reported by Mr. de St. Evremond; “When men have once taken out of
“Christianity what they have foisted into it,
“there will be but one Religion, as plain in its
“doctrine as pure in its morals(*g*).”

And we are told the very same thing in other words by Mr. Chillingworth. “The presumptuous imposing the Senses of *men* upon the
“words of *God*; the *special* Senses of men upon
“the *general* words of God, and laying them

(*g*) St. Evremond, Vol. II. page 168.

“upon

“ upon mens consciences together, under the
 “ equal penalty of death and damnation: This
 “ vain Conceit, that we can speak the things of
 “ God better than the *words of God*; This
 “ Deifying our Interpretations, and Tyrannous
 “ enforcing them upon others; this *restraining*
 “ of the Word of God from the *latitude* and
 “ *Generality*, and the understandings of men
 “ from that *liberty*, wherein Christ and the
 “ apostles left them, is, and hath been the only
 “ fountain of all the Scisms of the Church, and
 “ that which makes them immortal; The com-
 “ mon Incendiary of Christendom, and that
 “ which tears in pieces not the Coat but the
 “ bowels and members of Christ, Ridente Tur-
 “ ca nec dolente Judæo. Take away these
 “ walls of separation, and all will quickly be
 “ *one*. Take away this persecuting, burning,
 “ cursing, damning of men for not subscribing
 “ to the words of Men as the words of God,
 “ &c. so it may be hoped, that by God’s
 “ blessing, Universal liberty, thus moderated,
 “ may quickly reduce Christendom to Truth
 “ and Unity.” Rel. of Protest.

But whatever be the Event with regard to
 particular Churches; whether they will, or will
 not quit their Corruptions, and return to the
 plain Truth, as it is in the Scripture; we are
 well assured by the Prophets, that the day will
 come, probably a time of great tribulation and
 trial,

trial, and persecution of the witnesses to the truth (*b*) ; when genuine Christianity shall flourish, and Providence shall work its way through the present Apostacy against all the powers of the world which shall resist it, either by their Reformation or Destruction; and our Politicians, whether Civil or Ecclesiastick, may have it in their power *at present* to determine for which of them they please; but how long the opportunity may last God only knows.

St. Paul assures us that former things are written for our instruction; and we find through the whole course of Providence, recorded in Scripture, and verified in the history of the world, that when a nation, to whom God hath reveled his will, hath corrupted revelation, or ceased by a neglect of it, to carry it on to perfection in its native purity, he hath chastened them by afflictions; and when incorrigible by his correction, he hath cast them off as improper instruments of his Providence, (for God Almighty works by second causes) and transfer'd his favour to others who are more ready to receive and obey his will. And therefore though it should be looked upon by the Politicians to be enthusiastick, and perhaps a mark of fanaticism to admit the designs of Providence into their Systems of government, because it has

(*b*) Rev. xi. 14. 15. Dan. xii.

been sometimes done injudiciously, yet it ought to be considered at the same time, to be the sign of great ignorance in the history of the world, not to have taken notice of such an important Truth, and of extreme folly in the Politicians who call themselves Christians, not to avail themselves of that Knowledge.

I shall end the whole with a Quotation from Dr. Sykes.

“ The growth of Infidelity has long been the
 “ subject of great Complaint amongst serious
 “ well-meaning people: may it not be worth
 “ considering, whether the true cause of In-
 “ fidelity does not lie among those who profess
 “ a faith which they call Christian, and which is
 “ found inconsistent with reason, and even com-
 “ mon sense? Every one that examines at all,
 “ will see additions made to the great Articles of
 “ Christianity. How many additions were
 “ made to what the Gospel has said concerning
 “ the Son and the Holy Ghost in the several
 “ Creeds made in the 4th Century? This possi-
 “ bly was then done with a good design to fence
 “ in and to secure a right Faith. But whatever
 “ was the design, it has been attended with
 “ consequences fatal to Christianity itself. The
 “ fences have been considered as the *Thing fenced*
 “ in: and when men have seen things that they
 “ cannot comprehend or understand, taught as
 “ *Fundamentals of Christianity*, it is natural to
 “ re-

“ reject what is unintelligible, as impossible to
 “ be required by God : And thus must *Infidelity*
 “ prevail.—Whereas if one takes the Religion
 “ of Christ, *as it lies in the word of God*, it is
 “ pure, peaceable, and no ways contrary to
 “ Reason, *intelligible* by every body, so far as
 “ every body is concerned. The Evidence for
 “ its truth is clear, and plain, and easy. The
 “ Poor had the Gospel preached to them at
 “ first, as well as the Rich ; and the poor are
 “ to be saved as well as the rich, and therefore
 “ the one can *understand* what is required of
 “ them by Christ, as well as the other. But
 “ then, if men will presume to take the word
 “ of God into *their* Hands and will new *mould*
 “ and *frame* it, as they think fit ; and will
 “ make what is easy, to be hard and unintel-
 “ ligible, and then will anathematise and perse-
 “ cute men for refusing to profess what they do
 “ not understand ; there will always be Inf-
 “ delity cover’d under the mask of Christianity :
 “ and Christianity, or what is so called, will
 “ be slyly or openly attacked ; and till it is pro-
 “ fessed pure and uncorrupted, it must have its
 “ Enemies : and if *Offences* arise, *Woe unto him*
 “ *by whom the Offence cometh.*”

F I N I S.

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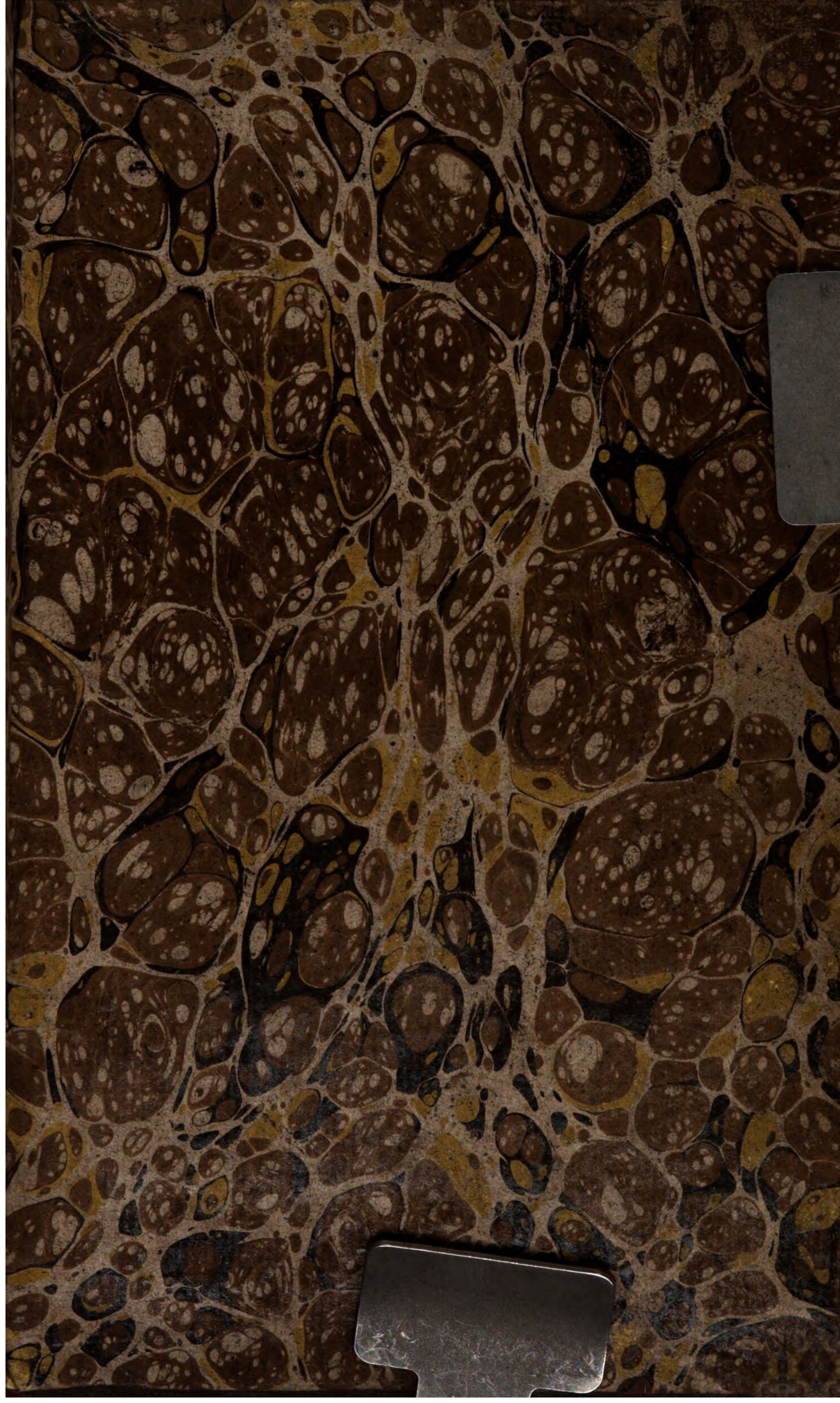
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Taylor, Henry

Farther thoughts on the nature of the grand apostacy of the Christian churches, foretold by the Apostles with observations on the laws against heresy, the subscription to articles of human composition

London 1783

Polem. 2681

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